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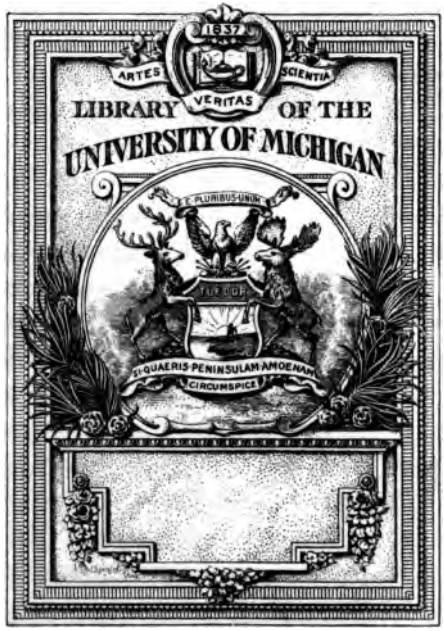
TWENTY YEARS AT SEA

FREDERIC STANHOPE HILL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TWENTY YEARS AT SEA

OR

LEAVES FROM MY OLD LOG-BOOKS

BY

FREDERIC STANHOPE HILL

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1893

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TO MY WIFE,

TO WHOSE SUGGESTION THE PUBLICATION OF THESE EPISODES IN A BUSY LIFE IS MAINLY DUE,

I dedicate this book.

INTRODUCTION

In the old days, fifty years ago, when I first went to sea, it was the custom in fine weather, in most ships, after supper had been leisurely discussed and pipes lighted, for both watches to gather on the forecastle deck to listen to the yarns of some old tar, or to join in one of the many ballads with a rattling chorus, in which the exploits of Dick Turpin, Claude Duval, or some other dashing knight of the road were set forth in glowing terms and endless verses.

Many an evening, when a boy, I have coiled myself up on the deck, close to the windlass bitts, with my jacket rolled up under my head as a pillow, and have listened with eager interest to those tough yarns, while the good ship, with every inch of canvas, from courses to moonsails, drawing, gently rose and fell with rhythmic motion, as she ploughed her way through the long rolling swells of the broad Pacific.

A hundred feet above our heads, the tapering point of the skysail mast swayed; in the heavens about us blazed the brilliant constellations of the southern hemisphere; beneath us the waves gently swished as the sharp forefoot clave them asunder, and the story-teller droned on with his tales of peril by storm and wreck, or, perchance, in a lighter vein, dwelt upon the charms of that lass in some far-away port who loved a sailor.

That was indeed the poetry of sea life! But like everything else that is pleasant in this world, the hour in which we enjoyed it was brief and it came to an end, often in the very midst of the most exciting episode of a story, with the harsh cry from the quarter deck: "Strike eight bells! Set the watch, and lay aft here and heave the log!"

I here propose, in my turn, as though sitting on the windlass bitts, to give some chapters from my old log-books, which, however, are somewhat more veracious than many of the stories often told in that way. For barring a little — a very little — license, such as must be allowed any old barnacle-back when he starts out to spin a yarn, these sketches

may be considered very truthful pictures of a sailor's life fifty years ago, and veritable experiences in the navy during our civil war.

Such as they are, then, I offer these sea stories to my young friends for their approval, premising by saying that a few of the sketches have already appeared in the "Youth's Companion" and in the "Cambridge Tribune."

F. STANHOPE HILL.

CAMBRIDGE, 1893.

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PART I

IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE

TWENTY YEARS AT SEA

PART I

IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE

CHAPTER I

HOW I WENT TO SEA

It was a blazing hot morning of the first week in September, 1842. The sun was pouring down with the fierce heat that so often marks the departing days of our Northern summers, and the evil smells in the filthy gutters of the southern section of Brooklyn were more than usually noxious.

A Knickerbocker ice-wagon had stopped at the corner beer saloon, and the sturdy, blue-shirted driver was carrying in a great block of ice, while the children of the tenement overhead were picking up the fragments from behind the wagon. Across the street, half a dozen frowsy, tow-headed boys were striving to

drive an unwilling goat, harnessed to a soap-box on wheels, in which was seated one of their number, and the little wretches were cheerfully beating the unfortunate animal with a piece of iron hoop, when it stopped, to bleat forth its complaint.

A marine in blue uniform coat and white trousers, on duty at the Navy Yard gate, hard by, walked his beat, keeping close to the grateful shade of the high brick wall of the inclosure, and covertly watching the struggle between the children and the goat. The corporal of the guard lounged on a bench beneath the wooden porch of the guard-house, deeply interested in the morning paper.

Two persons, evidently strangers, came down the street, stopped hesitatingly at the gate, and asked a question of the corporal.

"The Bombay, is it?" said the marine. "You will find her at the dock near the shears. Keep down that path to the right, pass the commandant's house, then take the first turn to the left, and you will see her."

The elder of the two strangers, who thanked the corporal, was a grave, respectable, middle-aged man, with the general appearance of a

trusted bookkeeper in some mercantile house, as indeed he was; his companion, evidently under his charge, was a bright-looking lad of thirteen, dressed in a blue sailor suit, with a tarpaulin hat with long ribbons hanging down his back. The boy's fair skin and delicate appearance, however, indicated very plainly that he could not have had a very extended experience as a sailor.

Following the directions given them, the man and the boy soon reached the dock, where a good-sized merchant ship was moored, taking on board the cargo that filled the wharf.

Here we paused. I say we, for the boy was the writer, who is about to tell you his life story; and his companion was Mr. Mason, my uncle's bookkeeper, sent over from New York to see me safely bestowed on board the good ship Bombay for my first voyage to sea.

"Well, Robert," said Mr. Mason, "here we are; and now, before I take you on board, I am instructed by your uncle to ask you for the last time if you still persist in your resolution of going to sea. It is a hard life, lad, and I almost wonder that you should desire to undertake it. Come! take my advice; it is not yet

too late: had n't you better turn around and go back? there is no harm done yet."

"You are very kind, Mr. Mason, and I thank you for what you have said; but I shan't change my mind. We will go on board, if you please."

But before leaving the wharf, as I shall have a long story of my sea life to tell, suppose I go back a bit and explain how I came to be starting out for myself in this manner at such a tender age.

I was always a delicate lad, and had never been very strong, after I recovered from a fever that brought me well-nigh to death's door several years before, and I had never cared much for the usual out-door sports of boyhood. Then I had an untiring passion for reading; and when I could curl myself up in a big arm-chair with dear old "Robinson Crusoe" or "Midshipman Easy," I was perfectly happy, and forgot all the world in the adventures of one hero and the frolics of the other.

I have no doubt that my favorite books had something to do with it; for by the time I reached the age of thirteen and had been in the High School a couple of years, I had

firmly decided in my own mind that I would be a sailor and nothing else. I had not lived in a seaport, and knew nothing of ships or sailors except what I had gathered from reading, and there seemed to be no very good reason for this decision. But it was just possible that my old grandfather, who was a famous sea captain in his day, had transmitted to me a strain of his sailor blood, rather than my poet father; so instead of fitting for college or going into a counting-room, my parents at last consented that I should go to sea.

My seafaring books had prepared me to expect hardships in the merchant service that I would not find in the navy, and I was boy enough to be thoroughly alive to the attractions of a middy's uniform and dirk, for they wore dirks in those days; so when it appeared that a midshipman's warrant might possibly be obtained for me by family influence, I was very anxious to enter the navy. This was before the establishment of the Naval Academy in 1843, and when midshipmen were appointed and sent at once to sea.

But my father wisely said: "No; let Robert try one year in the merchant service, and

then if he finds a sea life distasteful he can easily abandon it, without any breach of good faith. But if he enters the navy, he will not feel the same liberty to resign, nor indeed have the opportunity of doing so, until after the expiration of a three years' cruise."

So it was settled that I should enter as a boy on board the ship Bombay, Leonard Gay, master, bound from New York to Rio Janeiro with a cargo of naval stores for the Brazil squadron. The ship was owned by a relative of ours.

How well I remember one fine summer day, fifty years ago, going down on Commercial Street in Boston with my father to order my outfit. I never pass along there now and inhale the mingled odors of tarred rigging, salt fish and New England rum, that seem perennial in that locality, that this important visit to the outfitter is not recalled. The mist of half a century of years rolls back, and I, a grave, gray-haired, somewhat rheumatic old man, seem for a moment a light-hearted boy again.

My father had been directed to the establishment of an old sailor turned tradesman, quite an original character in his way, and very

well known in those days for his good wares and honest dealing. He was instructed to provide me with everything necessary for a voyage to the tropics and a winter on the English coast; and while my father was discussing the requisites for such a cruise with the proprietor, I was taking in the strange surroundings of the shop, so novel to a boy just down from Vermont.

It was a small, irregular shaped store, very low studded, which had enabled the old fellow to avail himself of the beams, from which hung specimens of his wares, all of them new to me. Upon one hook was a complete suit of oil clothing, southwester (as the head covering is called) and all, dangling and swaying about in the summer breeze and looking very much indeed like some mutinous tar or heavy weather pirate expiating his nautical crimes upon a gallows. Brilliant red flannel shirts were stacked up in great piles upon the shelves, and formidable sea boots overflowed from boxes ranged beneath the counter; gay bandanna handkerchiefs and glossy black silk neckerchiefs were temptingly displayed in the showcase; while on one side was a miscellaneous

assortment of ironmongery utterly strange to me at that time, that I afterward came to know better as marline-spikes, prickers, fids, palms and sail needles, and sheath knives and belts.

Jack's lass had not been forgotten; for in the window were hung, as a special attraction, certain printed handkerchiefs with pictorial representations of the "Sailor's Farewell," the "Jolly Tar's True Love," and other subjects of a sentimental character. In the rear of the store was an old-fashioned desk, with a fly-blown calendar hanging above it, and a ship's chronometer ticking away in its case on one side; while above it, hung a spy-glass in brackets, and upon the shelf were an odd looking mahogany case and a ponderous leather-bound volume. These I came to know better, subsequently, as a sextant and the sailors' *vade mecum*, "Bowditch's Epitome of Navigation."

This collection interested me amazingly, but I was soon called upon to select my "chist," as the dealer called the gayly painted box he exhibited for my inspection. It was dark blue with vermilion trimmings, and had green-covered "beckets," as the handles are called.

This one, he said, "was neat and not gaudy, and had a secret till where a feller could stow away his tobacco and his ditty box," which he seemed to think a very important consideration. This ditty box, by the way, is not, as one might well suppose, a special receptacle for ballads, but is for the thread, needles, buttons, etc., which are such necessaries on a long voyage, where every man is perforce his own tailor.

Into my chest were packed, under the advice of the proprietor, an assortment of red flannel shirts and drawers, with thick woolen stockings for cold weather and blue drilling trousers and white duck frocks for the tropics. Stout shoes and sea boots and a full suit of oil-clothes were provided for rainy weather, and two suits of blue cloth went in — one for ordinary wear of satinet, the other of broadcloth, with brass anchor buttons, for a Sunday go-ashore suit. These, with a tin cup and plate, a spoon, and fork for my mess, and a belt and sheath knife, completed the outfit, to which the dealer added, as a gratuity or "lanyap," as he called it, a dozen clay pipes, a pound package of smoking tobacco, and a

bundle of matches, "to make the fit out reglar."

These gifts, rather scorned at the time, came in good play at a later date, and gained me many desired favors with my future shipmates.

By the time my chest was filled, locked, and the key deposited in my pocket, I was full of excitement and crazy to have it sent home for my mother's inspection. The business completed by paying the bill, we returned home to Summer Street, where we were staying for a week with my uncle, and I answered every ring at the bell myself until the anxiously expected box was at last received.

Nothing then would do but I must try everything on for my cousin's delectation, and the entire afternoon was devoted to a series of dress rehearsals with the different costumes. Poor, dear, little mother! many a tear she shed that night as she repacked those strange, rough garments that were to take the place in the future of the delicately made clothing it had been her pride and joy to fashion for her dearly loved boy.

The days now flew swiftly while I made my farewell visits to friends and relations, and my

chest was filled in every corner with their last offerings. These, in most cases, took the form of rich cakes, mittens, or comforters for my neck; but I well remember an eccentric uncle bringing down a pair of dueling pistols as his parting gift, to the great horror of my mother, but to my infinite delight, as all boys can well understand.

Under the excitement of these preparations I had kept my courage up very bravely, but I almost broke down when the time came for parting and my mother clasped me in her arms in an agony of grief, exclaiming, "I cannot let him go from me!"

But when I was at last in the cars and had really started off on my journey, I felt that I must put aside all childish feelings and show myself a man and an American sailor. I had insisted upon traveling in full sea rig, and I wore my new blue suit, with white shirt and black silk neckerchief tied in a sailor's knot, and a shiny tarpaulin hat, with long streaming ribbons hanging down my neck. I was, in fact, a veritable nautical dandy.

As I was only thirteen and small for my age, I have no doubt I presented rather a

noticeable appearance. At any rate I know that quite a number of passengers spoke to me very pleasantly on board the Sound boat; and as I was walking through the saloon an old lady called me to her, and, after asking me no end of questions, gave me a kiss and a warm, motherly hug, rather to my mortification, I must confess.

The day after my arrival in New York I was sent over to the Brooklyn Navy Yard with my uncle's bookkeeper to report for duty, and here we were.

As I walked up the Bombay's gang-plank a rough looking man in his shirt sleeves eyed me rather sharply, and said, "Well, youngster, what do *you* want?"

"I wish to see the captain, sir."

"What do you want of him? The captain is n't on board, but I am the mate."

"I am Robert Kelson, sir, and I am sent to go to sea in this ship. Mr. Mason, here, has a letter to the captain."

At this juncture my companion interposed and explained the matter to the mate, giving him the letter to the captain, and then, evidently very much disgusted at our reception,

endeavored again to dissuade me from my project; but I would not listen to him, and, shaking his hand, bade him good-by and accompanied him on shore.

When I returned the mate said: "Go down in the steerage; you will find your chest there; it came early this morning; get those longshore togs off and put on your working clothes. Then come up here, and I will find something for you to do."

I looked about, not discovering anything answering at all to my idea of a stairway, when the mate, evidently understanding my dilemma, shouted: "You Jim! come here and take this greenhorn down into the steerage and show him his chest, and be quick about it! do you hear? Don't you two boys stay loafing down there spinning yarns!"

I had never been spoken to so roughly before in my life, and for a moment I half regretted that I had not listened to Mr. Mason's advice; but it was now too late, so I choked down a sob and followed Jim into that portion of the between decks from the mainmast aft which was called the steerage.

My companion informed me that I was to

sleep and mess there with him and the ship's carpenter. After looking about for a time we discovered my chest, half hidden beneath a pile of sails, and proceeded to pull it out to the light.

"What in thunderation have you got in this dunnage barge?" said Jim, as he sat down on the hatch coaming and looked at my beloved chest, half in admiration at its brilliant coloring and half in scorn at its size and weight. "Why, it weighs pretty nigh half a ton, and it 's big enough to hold a fit-out for a three years' v'y'ge!"

As I deemed it advisable to placate Jim at the outset, I unlocked the chest, and hunting out one of the plum-cakes, divided it with my comrade, who watched this proceeding with ill-concealed anxiety and interest.

"Well, by gosh, you 're a lucky feller; how many more of these 'ere you got, anyhow? Lem'me look at your knife," as my new sheath knife turned up; "what did you give for that knife? I got mine down by Fulton Market for a quarter, and I 'll bet it 's as good as yours! Yes, sir!" he shouted, in response to an imperative call from the mate above; "I 'm

coming right along!" And he half choked himself in his effort to swallow the rich cake as he said, "Look here, young feller, you'd better hurry up too; old Bowker will give you rats if you don't get on deck mighty quick!"

I put on my second best suit, all too good, as it proved, for what was expected of me, and hurried on deck. Mr. Bowker hunted up a scraper, which is a triangular piece of steel with a wooden handle, and initiated me into its use in scraping the pitch from a portion of the decks that had lately been calked; and this, the first real work I had ever done in my life, was also my first lesson in "the sailor's art."

At noon Jim and I were "knocked off," as stopping work is termed, and told to go to the galley and carry the dinner down into the steerage. Jim seized the kid, a small wooden tub containing a rough piece of boiled beef, and left me to bring the "spuds," as he called the potatoes. While the cook, who was as black as the ace of spades, was fishing these out of the coppers, he looked me over critically and said, "Wot's yo' name, boy?"

"Robert Kelson," I replied.

"Look yere, boy, we don't pomper no boys here wid no 'Roberts.' Yo' name 's Bob 'board dis ship; you understand? Now, Bob, is dis yo' fust voyage to sea?"

"Yes."

"Co'se it is; any one can see dat. Well, Bob, if you 'haves yo'se'f and don't cut up monkey shines, like dat boy Jim does, I no doubt you 'll get on very well. But you mus' n't 'spect to be pompered. I reckon you done had too much ob dat a'ready by yo' looks. Now you go 'long down and eat yo' dinner, and den you come up and pick dis chicken fer me, and I gwine gib you dese tapioca puddin' scrapin's fer yo' dessert. I likes yo' looks, and I gwine stand friend to you, boy!"

I had learned at boarding-school the lesson that it is a good thing to be friends with the cook, so I assented to this proposal and went below with the potatoes.

"Chips," as the carpenter is called on shipboard, although we boys were not permitted to take this liberty, was a gaunt, red-headed, surly, opinionated Dane, a good mechanic and a splendid seaman, but anything but an agree-

able messmate. As I came down he hailed me: "Vot, in de name of Heffen, you been doin' all dis time wid dose potatoes, you boy? You 'spose I am goin' to wait all day for my dinner while you 're gorming 'round the galley, you lazy hound? If you try any of your games on me, my lad, I 'll warm you up wid a fathom of rattlin' stuff!" and so he grumbled on, while I endeavored to explain that the cook had detained me.

"Vell, don't you do it again; that 's all," and he picked out the best of the potatoes and cut off the choicest part of the beef, leaving me the fat, which I detested, for my share.

After we had finished eating this meal, which nothing but a healthy young appetite, strengthened by my morning's unaccustomed work, could have rendered endurable, I was instructed by Jim that it was the duty of the new boy to carry up the pots and pans to the galley to be washed, and Chips told me to hurry up and bring him a light for the pipe he was then industriously filling for an after-dinner smoke.

I submitted to these orders with an ill grace;

and when I had seated myself on the spare spars lashed by the side of the galley, with the cook, whom I instinctively felt was a friend, I put the case to him and asked his advice.

"Now, Bob," said he, "I tole you I gwine to be yo' friend, and I means what I said. I done tuck yo' measure, my son, soon 's you come on board, and I know'd you'se a quality youngster immegitely. You'se different breed o' dog fum dat low-down Jim, and dat 's why I tole you dat you was n't gwine to be pompered here, cos I wanted to prepare you fer what was comin'. Bob, you'se like a young bar; yo' trouble 's all befo' you. But you des keep a quiet tongue in yo' head, and watch out wid yo' eyes open, and learn all you can, and 'fore you know it you 'll be jest as good as any ob 'em!"

"Yes, cook, that 's all right, but I can't let Jim impose on me, you know."

The old darky grinned from ear to ear. "Dat 's so, honey! Blood will tell, sho's you born, and you'se got some of what my ole marse used to call 'diwine 'flatus'; wotever dat is, dat belongs to quality folks and always

fotches 'em on top ob de heap. So if dat Jim runs you *too* hard, why I 'speck you'se duty bound to take yo' own part. You know wot de good S'marikan said: 'Ef de Farisee hit you on one cheek, you hit him on de udder.' Now Bob, here 's yo' pudden', and don't let de mate see you eatin' it on deck."

The doctor, as the cook is always called on board ship, had been a plantation darkey, and possessed that keen insight peculiar to his race in certain matters. He recognized at once that I was of gentle birth, and attached himself to me from the first. He was my firm friend as long as we were shipmates together, and many a surreptitious pot of coffee in the morning watch and plate of "menavalins" from the cabin table I owed to his kind offices during the voyage.

For the remainder of the week I was kept busily engaged from early morning until dark, so that I was only too glad to crawl into my hammock soon after our simple evening meal each day, and I was not sorry when at last our hold was filled, our hatches calked down, and a gang of riggers bent our sails, and we were ready for sea. Then one afternoon our crew

was brought down by a shipping-master, a tug came alongside, we cast off our fasts from the Navy Yard wharf, and steamed down the bay.

As all my good-bys had been made in Boston, I experienced no particular feelings of regret as we passed down the harbor and bay, and at last made sail, cast off the tug, dropped the pilot, and saw Sandy Hook light sink away below the horizon. I had indeed no time for much sentiment; for as the good ship began to rise and fall to the long ocean swell, increased by the strong breeze that was blowing from the southeast, I soon became oblivious to everything, for I was quickly in the agony of seasickness.

Meanwhile the wind was freshening, and, the top-gallant sails having been taken in, the ship was plunging into the head beat sea and creaking and groaning in what seemed to me a very ominous manner. I had already paid my *devoirs* to Neptune several times until I was fearfully weak; and the last time, as I came from the lee rail, I fell prone into a convenient tub that contained a large coil of rope — the main topsail halyards, as it proved, unfortunately.

Just then a stronger flaw of wind struck the ship, and the mate, coming into the waist, shouted out: "All hands stand by to reef topsails! Let go the topsail halyards! Clew down and haul out the reef-tackles! Be sharp, men! Be sharp!"

The words were meaningless to me, but I saw a form near me casting off a rope from a belaying pin over my head; there was a whizzing sound; I was thrown from the tub into the air with great violence, and I knew nothing further!

CHAPTER II

MY FIRST VOYAGE

WHEN I returned to consciousness I could not at first imagine where I was, but the creaking and groaning of the ship as she labored in the heavy seaway and the abominable smell of bilge water soon brought me to a realizing sense of the fact that I was in my hammock in the steerage. After some mental effort I recollected that I had been thrown from the tub in which I had been sitting on deck, though how or why this had happened I could not understand. But I was too deathly seasick just then to care to follow out this train of thought, and I languidly dozed and wondered whether we should all go to the bottom together in this gale. I fancy I rather hoped we might thus end the matter with the least personal exertion, and that death under existing circumstances would prove a happy release.

But I was recalled to myself by the cook,

coming softly up to my hammock with a shaded light and gazing down at me with evident interest.

"Robert," said he, for the first and last time calling me by my full name, "is you come to yo'se'f, honey, sure enough?"

I moaned, as a reply.

"Oh, I reckon you'se all right now, Bob! De ole man says dere 's no bones broke, and ef dat is so I specs you come out first-rate soon 's yo' stummick 's done settle down. But you certainly did have a mighty narrer squeak! Whatever put it into yo' head, boy, to squat down into dat topsail halyard tub? It 's a clean wonder you did n't get carried chock up to de main-top! Well, I don't reckon you ever try dat seat again in a hurry. Now, honey, you drink dis 'ere pot of cabin tea, and den go to sleep, and by ter-morrow you 'll be as bright as a button."

Any one who remembers a first voyage can imagine what I suffered in that abominable hole, alone and uncared for, save for the friendly ministrations of that poor negro cook, during the next three days. I really believe I should have died from mere exhaustion if it

had not been for the little delicacies he smuggled down to me. But fortunately there is an end to seasickness, and on the third day the captain condescended to remember that I was on board, and that he had not seen me since he had examined me after my involuntary feat of ground and lofty tumbling. So down he came into the steerage, and by his order I was carried up on deck into the pure, fresh air, where I soon rallied; and before another day I was myself again, or nearly so, at any rate.

During my illness the ship had been prepared for sea by work that is always done by the crew the first few days out from port. This consists in securing the anchors in board, lashing the spare spars on deck, and clearing away all rubbish that has accumulated in port. Then there is "chafing gear" to be put on aloft and a thousand odd jobs to be done that no one but a sailor can understand, all of them very necessary on a long voyage, however.

The Bombay was, for those days, a good sized ship of about six hundred tons register, but she would seem a mere tender by the side of the marine monsters of the present time. Her crew included twelve men and two

boys, with captain, two mates, carpenter, cook, and steward. The men had been, as usual, divided into two watches, and I had fallen into the mate's, or port watch. "It was Hobson's choice" in my case, as Mr. Bowker delicately remarked in informing me of my station. It was very evident that I was not, as yet, considered a very valuable acquisition to his force.

"Now look here, you Bob," said the mate one fine afternoon when I was barely convalescent, "you 've been playing seasick passenger about long enough. It 's time you began to be of some use on board and to earn your grub. I 'm going to be doctor myself! Look up aloft there, my lad; do you see that royal yard?"

I looked up, as he bade me, at the royal masthead, where the yard seemed to me to be about five hundred feet above the deck where we stood.

"Yes sir, I see it."

"Very well, now suppose you waltz up there and take a closer look at it! It 's going to be a very familiar road for you this voyage, and you had better make yourself acquainted with the way at once;" and he smiled at his wit, which I failed to appreciate just then.

The ship was on the wind, with all sail set and drawing well, and she was reasonably steady; but as I gazed aloft the mast was sweeping about in a very dazing manner, and the rigging away up there seemed to me about the size of a fishing line. Remember, I had never been aloft in my life! I hesitated.

"Well, Bob, I am waiting for you, but I shan't wait very long, my son;" and he picked up a piece of rattling stuff, a cord about the thickness of one's finger, and ostentatiously swayed it to and fro.

I saw that he meant business, and I started on the trip at once. I have been aloft, since that beautiful afternoon, many times in howling gales of wind to close-reef topsails. I have crawled out to storm furl a sail in a typhoon in the Straits of Sunda when the force of the wind pinned me to the yard and I felt that every moment might be my last. I went through that hell of fire in the old Richmond, astern of Farragut in the Hartford, when we passed Forts Jackson and St. Philip below New Orleans, but I am sure that I have never since experienced the abject fear I endured that day before I reached the Bombay's royal yard!

But I stuck to it and I accomplished the task at last, and my first lesson in seamanship, and the severest one, was past. Perhaps some of my readers may think that I magnify the undertaking, but, as I have said, I was a country lad, and in those days boys did not have gymnasiums, as they have now, to prepare them for such tests.

"Very well done, Bob, for a first attempt," said the mate laughingly, as I reached the deck and busied myself in getting my trousers pulled down my legs after my frantic struggle aloft; "but I thought you would have squeezed all the tar out of the royal backstay, you gripped it so savagely. Oh, you 'll make a sailor yet, lad, or I 'll know the reason why. Now go forward and turn the grindstone for the carpenter."

From that day on I was kept constantly in practice in going aloft, and was soon given the main royal to loose and furl; so that in my watch on deck no other person was ever sent aloft for that purpose, and what had been but a few weeks before such a terrible task, became mere play to me.

Meanwhile we were making our southing all

the time, and in due course we approached the equator. Here both Jim and I were subjected to the usual horse-play that in those days marked the event of "crossing the line," a custom now almost obsolete.

Neptune, represented by one of the men, came on board over the bows rigged out in a wig of tow, with a long beard, carrying as a trident a pair of grains, a kind of four-pronged fish spear. He asked us neophytes if we would promise never to eat brown bread when we could get white, unless we liked it better; never to kiss the maid when we could kiss the mistress, unless she were the prettier, and a lot more of such nonsense. As we attempted to reply one of the attendants forced a brush dipped in tar and ashes into our mouths, and they ended up by pulling away the board on which we were seated, thus giving us a ducking in a large tub of salt water.

However, the mate would not permit the men to go too far with us; so we at last escaped from our tormentors, and from that time were forever "free of the line" and at liberty to exercise our ingenuity in torturing other greenhorns when we had the opportunity.

I have failed to mention that our only passenger was a young passed-midshipman going out to join the Brazil squadron. His name was Clemson, and he was a general favorite fore and aft. Some years later he was drowned while striving to rescue one of his brother officers at the time of the loss of the United States brig Somers, capsized in the Gulf of Mexico. A handsome monument was afterward erected to his memory in the grounds of the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

As the days slipped along I was steadily gaining in the knowledge of my profession. On fine days, when there was little wind, I was sent to the wheel and taught to steer; at odd times I learned the mystery of making short and long splices and the various knots and "bends." From the drudgery of turning the winch I was gradually promoted to making spun yarn myself, as well as plain and French sennit and other stuffs used in such quantities on board ship. Sometimes I was set at work ripping up old sails with the sailmaker's gang; again at cleaning out paint pots and brushes in the paint-room, and I was taught how to handle a brush and lay on paint evenly. A boy

at sea thus really serves an apprenticeship at several trades, and a good sailor is, or should be, a seaman, a rigger, a sailmaker, and a painter; he is in reality a "Jack of all trades."

Kept busily engaged in this way, it was not strange that the time slipped by so quickly, and it did not seem long when, on the fifty-eighth day from New York, we made the land on the starboard bow, which proved to be Pernambuco, and five days afterward we sighted the Sugar Loaf, which rises abruptly twelve hundred feet from the sea at the entrance to the bay of Rio de Janeiro, one of the finest and most picturesque harbors in the world.

As soon as our anchor was dropped in the lower bay, we were surrounded by a fleet of boats of curious construction filled with jabbering negroes and native Brazilians, but none were permitted to come on board until after we had been inspected by the customs officer. He was a very great man indeed, who came alongside in a barge, with a wooden awning over the stern, flying a large Brazilian flag. This boat was pulled by twelve coal-black Congo negroes, naked from the waist up, who

rose to their feet at every stroke, and fell back on the thwarts with a kind of rhythmic grunt that they gave in unison.

The officer was a shriveled-up little Brazilian, looking like a cross between a chimpanzee and a parrot, with his wizened face and gorgeous uniform of green and yellow — the bilious colors of the Brazilian Empire. After satisfying all the formalities, we were permitted to have the natives on board, and they came with great bunches of bananas, bags of luscious oranges and fragrant pineapples, and other tropical fruits in bewildering variety, and at what seemed absurdly low prices.

Every one on board, fore and aft, invested in fruit, and we sat up late into the night to devour it, for it seemed that we could never be satisfied. Fifty years ago tropical fruits were not hawked about the streets of Boston as they are to-day, and I do not think that I had ever seen a banana before. So that after two months of salt-beef diet these delicacies were thoroughly appreciated.

The day after our arrival was Sunday; and after washing down decks in the morning and cleaning all the brass-work about the ship,

a duty that especially devolved upon Jim and myself, we were informed by the mate that the port watch was to have liberty on shore for the day.

How I did crow over Jim when this order was promulgated, for Jim was in the starboard watch, who were to remain on board, while we fortunate "larbowlins" were to pass the day amid the wonders of the strange city that looked so attractive from our deck.

Jim took occasion to upset some dirty water over my newly cleaned shoes while I was getting dressed, and then laughed spitefully at my discomfiture. This was by no means the first unpleasant trick Jim had served me since we left New York, and I had heretofore borne everything patiently; but this was the last straw that broke the camel's back. So we decided, after considerable mutual recrimination, to settle the feud then and there comfortably in the retirement of the steerage.

I had gained immensely in physical strength during the past two months, yet Jim was still rather the larger boy of the two; but I sailed in and succeeded, at last, in giving him about

the most thorough trouncing he had ever had in his life. When he cried "enough" and I hauled off to repair damages, I caught a glimpse of the old cook gazing in an interested manner down the hatchway at the affray. He grinned and shook his head approvingly. "Did n't I tole you so?" he said as he vanished.

After re-cleaning my shoes and effacing all evidences of the passage at arms from my face, I arrayed myself, for the first time since I came on board, in my best blue suit, and, topping it off with a new white sennit hat, I took my seat in the boat and was rowed on shore with the others of the port watch.

We passed through a great fleet of ships of all nations at anchor, gayly dressed in flags, among which the bright American ensign largely predominated, — for in those days our flag was found in every foreign port, — and were speedily deposited upon the landing stage, and made our way on shore.

Here a strange scene was presented. The plaza was filled with people of all shades of color, from the Congo African to the pure white Europeans, scattered here and there.

All were in their Sunday best, and with the fondness of the negroes for the most brilliant colors, the brightest reds and yellows were everywhere seen. All were chattering in Portuguese in the most animated manner; and as every one seemed to be talking at once it was indeed a very babel.

While I looked about me a tall, willowy mestizo girl came along carrying a tray upon her head, which at first I supposed contained some very elaborate confectionery; but to my astonishment, upon closer inspection I found she was bearing a little dead infant, dressed in white and covered with flowers. She was on her way to the Campo Santo, as I learned, to have it buried, and carried it, as they carried everything, very naturally upon her head. At the cemetery the bodies of the poor were piled each day in a long pit, which at night was filled with quicklime and closed up.

Strolling about, I came to a square with a large cathedral, near the Imperial Palace. While I looked around me a gay carriage, with six horses and outriders and a brilliant cavalry escort, came dashing up, and the youthful Emperor, Dom Pedro II., then scarce twenty

years old, alighted and passed into the church. This was the same Dom Pedro who a few years since visited the United States so unostentatiously and who was such an admirer of our country and of our countrymen and countrywomen. He died in exile a year or two ago, poor fellow!

As this was my first glimpse of royalty, it was, of course, very interesting, and I deemed myself quite fortunate at having seen this spectacle on my first day ashore. After the grandees had passed into the church, I continued on my tour of inspection, and soon came to the Rua de Ouvidor, where the jewelers had their shops. Here the show of diamonds so lavishly displayed recalled to my mind the stories I had read in the Arabian Nights; and as I passed into the adjoining Rua Direta I was equally charmed with the wondrous feather flowers, for which Brazil was then so noted.

But by this time, boylike, my appetite was asserting itself, and I began to look about for something more satisfying than diamonds and feather flowers. I had been eating oranges and bananas in the market-place, but these trifles did n't count for much, and I felt an

overpowering desire for a good square meal. But I could not speak a single word of Portuguese, and those now about me evidently spoke no English, so I was in rather a bad way.

I walked on and on; but as I had passed into the residential quarter of the city I could see nothing looking at all like a restaurant, and I became a little uneasy for fear I might lose my way. At this juncture I saw a very sweet-looking old lady standing in a doorway watching me as I approached her. I hesitated, half paused, and she spoke to me in Portuguese.

I shook my head to indicate that I could not understand, and, in despair resorting to pantomime, pointed to my mouth to show that I was hungry.

"Poor little fellow!" said she in English to a little girl by her side; "he must be dumb!"

Oh, what a relief it was to hear those words! Did my own language ever before sound so sweet! I hastened to convince the lady of her error, and to ask her where I could find a restaurant.

"Why, bless your soul, you dear little midget, come in and dine with me! Whatever

brought such a wee fellow as you all alone to Brazil?"

I attempted to decline this hearty invitation of my countrywoman, as she proved to be, but it was of no avail, and I was taken in and dined; and later, when it turned out that Mrs. —— was an old friend of my uncle in Boston, I was given a very charming drive in the suburbs, and finally returned in great state, soon after sunset, to the landing stage with my new friends. Before leaving the kind lady made me promise to call upon her again when I next came ashore.

CHAPTER III

THE MUTINY

I had been kept so late by my kind entertainer that I found by inquiry of the boat-keeper of a man-of-war cutter at the landing stage that the Bombay's boat with the liberty men had been gone for nearly an hour: and the coxswain, seeing my dilemma, called in a shore boat pulled by a couple of darkeys, who agreed to take me off to my ship for a few reis.

As we neared the Bombay I saw evidences of unusual commotion on board, and observed a signal of distress hoisted in the mizzen rigging. We pulled alongside, and scrambling on deck I discovered what was the trouble.

Among the naval stores which composed our cargo were six hundred barrels of whiskey. In those days liquor was served out as a daily ration in the United States Navy, but the practice did not prevail in the merchant service, liquor being allowed on board but few ships,

and it was served as a ration in no American vessels.

Sailors have always been noted for their ingenuity in stealing liquor; and to keep this out of his men's reach, our captain had stored the barrels in the fore and after runs, or lowest part of the lower hold. The sailors were aware of this, and on this Sunday had found their opportunity.

Mr. Bowker, the chief mate, and the port watch were on shore, and Captain Gay had gone on board another ship, the Angier, to pass the day and dine with her commander. This left Mr. Daniels, the second mate, in charge. He was a rather easy-going young man, and soon retired to his stateroom to enjoy the quiet day in reading an interesting novel.

Chips, the carpenter, after smoking a pipe, went to sleep in his bunk, and the crew found little difficulty in taking from his chest such tools as they wished. With these the starboard watch proceeded to cut a hole through the forecastle deck, and succeeded so well that by dinner-time they had broken out the upper tier of stores and exposed the barrels of whiskey.

The cargo they removed they piled up care-

fully in the quarters of the absent port watch, filling their side of the forecastle up to the carlines.

Not satisfied with broaching one barrel for immediate use, they providently decided to lay in a stock for future consumption, and to this end hoisted three barrels of whiskey up into the forecastle, and concealed them underneath their berths.

They then restored the remainder of the cargo to its place, and refitted the deck planks so carefully as scarcely to leave a trace of their work.

After dinner the watch settled down to the business of drinking and carousing. When at five o'clock in the afternoon Mr. Daniels, having finished his novel, came forward to call away the boat to bring the liberty men on board, he was startled at finding the entire watch drunk and inclined to be very quarrelsome.

He at once sent the carpenter and the boy Jim in the dingey on board the Angier to state the case to our captain, and he accepted the offer of Captain Edson to send the Angier's boat for our liberty men. The two cap-

tains then came at once on board the Bombay, in the dingey. The arrival, an hour later, of the liberty men, who were also drunk, made matters worse, instead of better, for the two watches fell to fighting in the forecastle.

This was the disturbance that was going on when I arrived on board. Captain Gay, who was one of the old-time sea captains and a very "taut hand" with his crews, ordered the second mate to go down into the forecastle and bring up any rum he might find there. He supposed, of course, that the liquor the men had obtained had been smuggled on board from the bumboat.

Mr. Daniels went down with a very ill grace, I thought. The forecastle was just then a very lion's den, and he did not stay long, but came up with a rush through the hatchway with a bleeding nose and puffed eyes.

When he could regain his breath, he exclaimed: "Captain Gay, they 've got a barrel of whiskey there on tap, and they are fighting over it like a lot of wild Indians! It was all I could do to get out of the forecastle alive!"

"A barrel! What do you mean?"

"It 's just so, sir; there is a barrel on tap,

and they are drinking it out of their pint cups! I am almost sure it is one of the barrels from the hold, but how on earth they got it out I can't imagine. The hatches have n't been opened to-day; that I will swear to!"

This was certainly a very bad state of affairs, and Captain Gay felt that he must take summary action. Going to the cabin, he returned with four revolvers and gave one each to the officers and to the carpenter. Then looking down the hatch, he shouted, "Men, come on deck at once, every one of you!"

A howl of derision was the only reply.

"I will give you five minutes to get up here, or I 'll come down there and find out the reason why!" he cried.

They simply yelled defiantly in drunken chorus.

"Come along, Mr. Bowker," said the captain. "You and I will start these fellows up. Mr. Daniels, you and the carpenter put the irons on them as they come up the hatchway!"

The captain and mate bravely started down the hatchway, revolvers in hand. They were taking desperate chances. It was no small thing for two men, even with arms in their

hands, to face a dozen sailors, maddened with drink, at close quarters, in a hand-to-hand encounter such as this must needs be. But those old-time skippers were accustomed to rough-and-tumble fights, and they never shirked an encounter of the kind, even at long odds.

Jim and I had gone forward to see the outcome of the affair, and we were, of course, in a high state of excitement as the captain and mate disappeared below.

For several minutes there was a terrible confusion of voices in the forecastle, and then a sound of blows and oaths, followed by the sharp crack of a pistol shot. Then a brief pause, followed by a renewal of the uproar. Another shot was fired, and almost immediately the captain appeared on the ladder, struggling with a stalwart fellow who had grasped the pistol by the barrel, and was striving to get possession of it.

The carpenter leaned over the scuttle and struck the sailor a heavy blow on the head with a pair of iron handcuffs, whereupon the fellow let go his grasp of the pistol and fell heavily down the ladder. The captain then came up, bleeding from a cut on the side of his face,

evidently the result of a blow, and with his clothing fairly torn to shreds. Mr. Bowker quickly followed, in an even worse condition, and without his pistol, which he had lost in the affray.

Mr. Daniels pulled over the scuttle and slipped in the hatch-bar; and, feeling that the wild beasts were at least caged, our side called a parley.

"I shot one of the scoundrels in the arm," said the captain. "Did your shot take effect, Mr. Bowker?"

"I think so, sir; but I am not sure of it. They closed in on me so I could not very well see."

I happened just then to glance through a port and saw a boat coming alongside. "Here 's a boat with some officers, sir," I reported.

The captain went to the gangway and received a Brazilian officer who came on board. Looking curiously at the captain's disordered condition, he said, "I am sent by the port captain to inquire what trouble you are in, as you have a distress signal flying."

The captain explained and the lieutenant

went forward to investigate. Mr. Bowker opened the scuttle, and the officer called down in his broken English, "Mariners, I command that you come on deck at once!"

"Who are you, monkey-face?" shouted a man from below. "Get out of this, or we will serve you worse than we did old Bowker!" At the same time a pistol shot whistled ominously past the young lieutenant, while a chorus of oaths and yells saluted him.

"But, captain," said the young man, "this is truly a mutiny! I must report to my commanding officer and obtain further assistance." And he hurried to his boat and left the ship.

By this time it was growing dark, and affairs were in a very bad state for the night. The two captains consulted together as to the best course to pursue. As discipline had now become almost a dead letter in the ship, we all gathered aft, having first secured the forward hatchway, and several propositions were discussed by the officers.

"Captain Gay," said Captain Edson, "if you take my advice you will not allow the authorities to interfere in the matter, at this stage of the mutiny at least. If they under-

take to settle it they will put you to no end of trouble and expense, and possibly delay your voyage. I have had some experience with them in a similar affair. I would at least exhaust my own resources first."

"That is good advice, as far as the Brazilians are concerned," replied Captain Gay, "but what shall I do with those wild men down in the forecastle?"

"Come below and we will talk over a plan by ourselves, where we have n't quite so many listeners," said Captain Edson, as he glanced at my companion Jim, who, with mouth and ears both wide open, was pushing forward to catch every word.

They went below, and Mr. Bowker, now that the excitement was over for the moment, found time to give us his attention; and we were set at work cleaning up the decks, securing the boats, and making all snug for the night.

In a short time the steward brought up an order to the mate to take the Angier's boat and go on board the Brazilian man-of-war Independenzia, with Captain Gay's compliments, and to say that we should not require any

assistance that night, but should be glad to have the police boat sent in the morning to take the prisoners on shore. Before going the mate was directed to see that the forward hatch was well lashed down and that a kedge anchor was put on it as an additional precaution against its being lifted off by a combined effort of the men below.

As the "prisoners" were as yet a long way from being secured, we were all very much mystified by this message from the captain, and the mate remarked to Mr. Daniels in my hearing that he "thought the old man had better catch his chickens before he counted them."

But all the same, he obeyed the order, and we went down into the steerage to supper, there to discuss the mutiny in all its various aspects. When the Angier's boat returned, Captain Edson went back to his own ship.

That night the mates and the carpenter kept the anchor watches between them, and the crew long before midnight succumbed to the effects of the liquor, and were all quiet in the forecastle.

The next morning we were aroused at day-

light, and for once found the captain on deck as early as any one. Jim and I were sent off at once in the dingey to bring Captain Edson on board, who came, bringing with him a mysterious package of something that smelled very much like matches.

Captain Gay received him at the gangway; and after they had drunk a cup of coffee, they both went forward with the mates and the carpenter, who to his and our surprise was ordered to bring his broad-axe with him. The captain then looked about carefully, and at last directed the carpenter to cut a hole through the deck planks something more than a foot square, between the beams. The carpenter was rather astonished, but obeyed orders, and the chips at once began to fly.

The captain then went to the galley and returned with an iron pot, to which he attached a line, and Captain Edson poured the contents of his package into the kettle. By this time the hole was cut through the deck.

"Stand by to open the scuttle, Mr. Bowker," said the captain. "Now, men," he called down, as the hatch was opened carefully, "are you coming up like men, or shall I make you come up like sheep?"

The crew greeted this request with shouts and oaths. Many of them had waked and were again drinking the liquor.

The captain closed the hatch and called out, "Cook, bring me a shovelful of live coals here!"

The cook came with the hot coals, which he put, as directed, into the pot.

As the dense white smoke of the burning brimstone in the vessel curled up, the captain lowered the pot through the hole in the deck, keeping it close up to the beams and out of reach of the men below, and then placed two wet swabs over the hole, so that none of the fumes could escape above.

Flesh and blood could not endure the suffocating vapors that immediately filled the forecastle. In less than five minutes there was a terrific rush up the ladder, and a violent effort was made to raise the hatch, which was prevented by the lashings and the heavy kedge anchor.

"Stand by, now, all of you!" cried the captain to the mates, "and clap the handcuffs on them as I let them through, one at a time!"

He opened one door of the scuttle, through

which the first man precipitated himself. He was at once secured and the door was closed. Then it was re-opened, and the crew were let out one by one until the whole twelve lay handcuffed on the deck in a row. The last men were scarcely able to crawl up, so dense were the noxious fumes in the forecastle.

When the work was completed, Captain Gay walked up and down the deck in a high state of glee at the entire success of his experiment, and addressed the captives as he passed:

"Oh, you are a precious lot of scoundrels, are n't you? You thought you had the weather-gage of me, did you? I think you will sing a different tune when you find yourselves in the calaboose! I have more than half a mind to give you a round dozen apiece before I send you there, just to warm myself up this morning! But I won't soil my fingers with you, you drunken brutes, much as I should enjoy it! Mr. Bowker, signal for the police boat, and send these fellows off as quickly as possible and let us be rid of them!"

He turned aft, and went down to breakfast with Captain Edson.

When the police boat came, the officer was

greatly surprised at finding so large a number of prisoners awaiting him. They were taken on shore; and after remaining in the city prison until we sailed, they were, as we subsequently learned, released, and were shipped by a whaler who came in short of hands.

Our captain picked up another crew without much difficulty, and we went on unlading. We then took on board a cargo of coffee and carried it to New Orleans, where we loaded with cotton for Liverpool.

CHAPTER IV

NOT BORN TO BE DROWNED

THE next voyage of the Bombay was to Mobile for a cargo of cotton, to be carried to Liverpool. It was the custom in those days for ships of any great size to discharge and take in their cargoes in the lower bay. The city is on the Mobile River, fully twenty-five miles above the entrance to the lagoon-like bay, cut off from the Gulf of Mexico by a narrow isthmus, upon the point of which the light-house stands.

The Bombay came to Mobile in ballast, so there was no cargo to discharge, very much to our satisfaction, as everything had to be loaded into large lighters, which made hard work for the crew.

Captain Gay, as was the custom, went up to the city as soon as the ship was safely anchored, to superintend the work of the brokers in obtaining freight, and to forward

the cotton to the ship with all possible expedition. The chief mate remained on board in charge of the ship.

Of all the dismal holes I had ever seen, the lower bay of Mobile was the worst. The low shores are either alluvial mud or clear sand; there were no trees, no inhabitants but a very few ignorant fishermen, and absolutely nothing to relieve the monotony of life on shipboard, divested even of the excitement that is found when at sea in the changes of wind and weather, and the making and taking in sail that follows calm or storm.

We were supposed to be in port, and Jack dearly loves his "Sunday liberty," with its attendant run ashore; but here no one cared to go on shore on Sundays or any other day, merely to wander about in the sand, half devoured by mosquitoes, and without a living soul to exchange a word with. Then, to make it even more disagreeable, as the bay is unprotected, and it was in the winter season, we were compelled to stand anchor watches at night, and keep our sails bent in readiness to slip our anchors and work off shore if a norther should strike us.

I have since lain at anchor off some very inhospitable and uninteresting shores, but I do not remember anything more detestable than life in Mobile Bay in 1844, unless, indeed, it was my blockading experience outside of that same bay in 1862, of which you will hear before you finish this volume.

Our only relaxation was crabbing. For this sport we took old iron hoops and wove upon them coarse nets of heavy twine, the meshes being very open. In these nets we fastened three or four pounds of the most ancient and malodorous salt beef we could find in the harness casks, — and these pieces could be scented the length of the ship. At night, the nets, heavily weighted, were thrown overboard with a stout line attached to them, and allowed to sink to the bottom.

The next morning we hauled the nets in, and rarely failed to find from one to half a dozen enormous hard-shelled crabs entangled in the meshes of each net and viciously fighting with each other. The result of these contests was frequently seen in an unfortunate crab minus half of his legs.

But the pleasure of crab-fishing soon palled

upon us, and not even a hardened sailor's stomach could endure a steady diet of these crustaceans. So, after the first week the crab nets were neglected, and we were forced into spending our few hours of leisure in sleep, an unfailing resource for a sailor.

However, the first lighter laden with cotton soon came down from Mobile, and with it a gang of stevedores who were to stow this precious cargo. At that time freights to Liverpool were quoted at "three half-pence a pound," which represented the very considerable sum of fifteen dollars a bale. So it was very much to the interest of our owners to get every pound or bale squeezed into the ship that was possible.

The cotton had already been subjected to a very great compression at the steam cotton presses in Mobile, which reduced the size of the bales as they had come from the plantations fully one half. It was now to be forced into the ship, in the process of stowing by the stevedores, with very powerful jackscrews, each operated by a gang of four men, one of them the "shantier," as he was called, from the French word *chanteur*, a vocalist. This man's

sole duty was to lead in the rude songs, largely improvised, to the music of which his companions screwed the bales into their places. The pressure exerted in this process was often sufficient to lift the planking of the deck, and the beams of ships were at times actually sprung.

A really good shantier received larger pay than the other men in the gang, although his work was much less laborious. Their songs, which always had a lively refrain or chorus, were largely what are now called topical, and often not particularly chaste. Little incidents occurring on board ship that attracted the shantier's attention were very apt to be woven into his song, and sometimes these were of a character to cause much annoyance to the officers, whose little idiosyncrasies were thus made public.

One of their songs, I remember, ran something like this: —

"Oh, the captain 's gone ashore,
For to see the stevedore.
CHORUS: Hie bonnie laddie, and we 'll all go ashore.

"But the mate went ashore,
And got his breeches tore,
Hie bonnie laddie," etc.

As Mr. Bowker had returned to the ship the day before, after a visit to the lighthouse, with his best broadcloth trousers in a very dilapidated condition, this personal allusion to the unfortunate incident, shouted out at the top of their hoarse voices by "Number One" gang was, to say the least, painful. We boys, however, thought the sentiment and the verse equally delightful.

The second lighter of cotton was towed down to us by quite a large high-pressure steamer, the Olive Branch, that was going on to Pass Christian with passengers. After dinner that day, Mr. Bowker, who was in an unusually amiable mood, called out, "You, Bob, take Charlie with you in the dingey, and go on board that steamer, and see if you can't get me some newspapers."

Charlie was the new boy, the successor to Jim, who had unostentatiously departed from the ship, "between two days," in Liverpool, last voyage. As Charlie was my junior, I took a great and not unnatural pleasure in making him as uncomfortable as possible when an opportunity presented. So I hauled the dingey up at once to the gangway, and, rous-

ing Charlie up from his unfinished dinner, started off for the steamer.

I had already become quite a good boatman, but this was a novel experience for me, and indeed it was quite a delicate matter to lay a small boat safely alongside one of those great sidewheel steamers while she was still in motion, — for the Olive Branch had not anchored, but had only stopped her engines and was slowly drifting.

As I approached the steamer I saw a man standing well forward of the wheel-house with a line ready to throw to us, and I headed the boat for him. As we came within good distance we tossed in our oars, the line was thrown, Charlie caught it, but stumbled and fell, and in a moment the dingey had capsized, and we were in the water and under the wheel of the steamer!

Unfortunately I had never learned to swim; and as I was heavily clad I went down in the cold salt water of the bay like a stone, and for a few seconds experienced all the agonies of drowning!

Then I rose and, as I came to the surface, found myself among the "buckets" of the

great wheel of the steamer, which were green and slimy with river moss, and as slippery as ice. By a tremendous physical effort I succeeded in getting astride of one of these buckets, and obtained a precarious position of comparative safety, as I thought at first.

But, to my horror, I was scarcely out of the water when the wheel commenced very slowly revolving. The terror of that moment I shall never forget. The recollection of it returns to me now, after all these years, and in my bad attacks of nightmare I sometimes fancy myself clinging again with desperation to a slowly revolving wheel, drenched, shivering with cold, and expecting each moment a horrible death!

In my agony I shouted aloud; but, inclosed on all sides as I was by the wheel-box, I felt sure that my cries could not be heard. In the darkness of this prison box the wheel slowly, very slowly revolved, carrying me up toward the top of the cover, where I fully expected to be ground to pieces; or if perchance I escaped that fate, I knew that I would be drowned when I was drawn under the water in the fearful suction beneath the wheel.

Escape seemed impossible, but frantic with fear I again shouted at the top of my shrill young voice till my lungs seemed ready to burst. Then the wheel stopped. There was a pause; I heard the noise of hurried feet upon the wheel-box above me, a trap door was opened, and the blessed light of day came struggling in.

I saw a man looking earnestly down into the darkness of the space beneath him, and I tried to call out, but my voice seemed paralyzed, and, for the moment, I could not make a sound.

Neither seeing nor hearing anything, the man rose from his knees and was about to close the trap-door, when I made another effort, and, thank God, a faint cry burst from my parched throat.

The man paused, then sprang upon the wheel, picked me up in his arms, and I fainted dead away!

After what seemed a long time, although, as I was told, it was but a few minutes, I recovered consciousness to find myself stretched out on a mattress, covered with a blanket, and surrounded by a number of kind-hearted women.

The passengers had seen the boat upset and noticed my sudden disappearance. Charlie, who could swim like a fish, was picked up, and declared that I was drowned. Indeed, he "saw me go down and never come up again."

By the merest chance the captain had not started the steamer ahead. If that had been done I should, of course, have been killed.

My clothes were soon dried in the engine-room, the dingey and her oars had been recovered, a generous bag of fruit and cake was packed for me by the sympathetic ladies, and we returned to the Bombay.

As I came up over the side, Mr. Bowker greeted me with, "Where have you been all this time, Bob?"

I explained to him my narrow escape from a dreadful death, to which he cheerfully responded: —

"Well, Bob, you certainly were not born to be drowned; look sharp to it, lad, that you do live to be hanged!"

CHAPTER V

A "SHANGHAEING" EPISODE

THE next three years of my life at sea were but a repetition of the first three months of my experience, with a slight change in the scene of the incidents and a natural increase in my knowledge of seamanship. For when I returned to Boston in the Bombay from Liverpool, at the end of my first year of probation, and the opportunity was again presented to me of going into the navy as midshipman, I declined the offer of my own free will.

My views had changed during the past year, for I had learned how slow promotion was in the naval service, and I had seen in our squadron in Brazil gray-haired lieutenants who were vainly hoping for one more step before going on the retired list. In fact, Farragut, who entered the navy as a midshipman in 1810, had passed through the War of 1812, and after thirty-one years' service was still a lieutenant in 1841.

During my year at sea my dear mother had died, my home was broken up, and when my cousin, who owned the Bombay, promised me that I should have the command of one of his ships when I was twenty-one, if I proved myself competent, I decided to stay where I was.

I received my first promotion to the position of second mate, when I was barely seventeen years of age, and a very proud youngster I was when I heard myself called "Mr." Kelson for the first time on the quarter-deck of the old Bombay, where less than four years before I had made my appearance as a green boy.

We were lying at this time at the levee in New Orleans, not far from Bienville Street, and abreast of the old French Market. The Bombay was the inner vessel of three in the tier, and formed a portion of the tow just made up by the tugboat Crescent City, and we were only waiting for our crew, soon to be brought on board by the boarding-house runners and the shipping-master.

There was a fine old custom that prevailed in New Orleans in those days of bringing the crew on board at night, at the last moment,

comfortably drunk, counting them as received, and bundling them into their berths in the forecastle, to sleep off the fumes of their debauch. And by the next morning, when the ship would be down the river at the Belize, the tugboat was cast off, and then, and not until then, would the ship's crew be needed to make sail and clear up the decks for sea.

It was the duty of the junior officer to receive and count the men as they came on board ship in every stage of intoxication. Some were brought over the gangway, absolutely helpless, by two stalwart runners; and when the ship's quota had been duly delivered in the forecastle the shipping and boarding-house masters received a month's advance pay for each man.

Whatever else might be said against this system, it certainly had the merit of simplicity; for as the voyage to Liverpool rarely exceeded thirty or thirty-five days, it was quite customary for the men to "jump the ship" in Liverpool as soon as she was docked, and, having little or no wages due them, they were cared for by another set of boarding-house sharks, who kept them during a very brief carouse in

the "Sailor's Paradise," as Liverpool was then called, and then quietly bundled them on board of another ship, bagging their advance pay, after the fashion of their New Orleans brothers in iniquity.

All this, however, is but the prelude to my little story. That Christmas eve in 1845 I, as second mate, stood at the starboard gangway of the old Bombay, crammed to her upper deck beams with cotton, and with a deck load beside, and had checked off thirteen men drunk and semi-drunk, as they came on board in squads of two and three.

"Now then, Mr. Kelson," said the chief mate, as he came up from the cabin, "have we got these men all aboard yet?"

"Only thirteen yet, Mr. Ackley," I responded, looking at my list by the light of the lantern hanging in the main rigging. "But here comes the shipping-master, sir."

"Where in thunder is that other man, Thompson?" said the mate. "The old man is as savage as a meat-axe down in the cabin, and you had better not see him till we have got our full complement on board."

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Ackley," replied

the shipping-master. "Here 's Dago Joe, now, coming with his man. Well, Joe, you almost missed your chance.' They are just ready to cast off the breast lines. What have you got in your handcart?"

"Oh, Mis' Thompson, he reglar ole' shellback, he is. He boad wid me six week. Came here bossun of de Susan Drew. You 'll 'member dis feller soon 's you see him. He say he won't ship less'n sixteen dollar mont'. Dat 's de advance I giv' him, 'cos I know Mis' Ackley like good sailor man."

"Why, he looks as though he were dead," said I, peering at the prone body in the cart.

"Who, he? Oh no, sir; he been takin' lil' drop too much dis evenin', but he be ol' right 'fore mawnin'. Oh, he sober fust-class sailor man. 'Sure you of dat, Mis' Ackley!"

At this moment our towboat gave an impatient whistle, and Captain Gay came up from the cabin, two steps at a time.

"Mr. Ackley, what *are* we waiting for? The tow has been made up for an hour, and we ought to have been a dozen miles down the river by this time!"

"The last man has just come on board, sir,"

replied the mate, "and I shall cast off at once."

"Be sharp about it then, sir!"

"Aye, aye, sir. Go forward, Mr. Kelson, and see to those head lines; take the cook, steward, and carpenter with you to haul them in. You, Joe, tumble that man of yours into the forecastle and get ashore yourself, or you 'll have a chance to take a trip down to the Southwest Pass! Let go the breast lines! Stand by forward!"

We cast off, the tugboat steamed ahead, the strong current struck us on the starboard bow, we slowly turned, and went on our way down the river, leaving the long line of twinkling lights of the Crescent City behind us.

The next morning at daylight the chief mate and I, after serious difficulties, succeeded in "rousing out" our befuddled crew, and then commenced clearing up decks and getting ready for making sail, for we were nearly abreast of Pilot Town, and would soon be over the bar.

Thirteen hard-looking subjects presented themselves from the forecastle, after some little time, but where was the fourteenth? A

diligent search of the men's quarters was at last rewarded by the discovery of the missing man — but such a man! A wretched-looking, frowsy-headed little creature, bandy-legged and narrow chested, a most unmistakable landsman, dressed in thin, blue cottonade trousers with a long-skirted, threadbare alpaca coat, buttoned over a calico shirt; with no waistcoat, or hat, and with well-worn lasting shoes on his feet. Trembling, blear-eyed, wild with evident astonishment at his surroundings, this unfortunate wretch was haled up before the mate by the carpenter, who had found him still asleep under one of the berths, hidden behind a large sea chest.

"Who the devil are you?" said Mr. Ackley roughly, looking contemptuously at the man, shivering in the chill of the early morning.

"Vere you vos takin' me?" inconsequently replied the man, staring about him. "I want to go by my home. Lisbeth must ogspect me. Please stop the boat, lieber Herr; I must go home!"

"He 's got 'em bad, sir," said the carpenter; "that New Orleans whiskey is mean stuff, sure. He 's got the 'trimmins, sir!"

"Who shipped you, you measly dog?" shouted the mate, paying no attention to the carpenter. "Come, speak up, or I'll lather the hide off of you! Who shipped you I say?" raising a rope in a threatening manner.

"Please, goot gentleman, don't strike me! I vant to go home. Lisbeth must ogspect me long ago. Why did you bring me here, goot gentleman?"

"I'll 'goot gentleman' you! Here, Chips, take this fellow and put him under the head pump. Freshen him up a bit, and then I'll warm him with a rope's end and see if I can't get some sense into him!"

The carpenter and one of the crew dragged the struggling man forward, and held him while one of the boys, delighted at the opportunity, pumped the cold river water over the poor creature, whose screams were drowned in the rough merriment of the sailors.

I look back at this scene now, as I record it, and at many others, even worse, that followed during the next month, and wonder if we were all — officers and men — brutes, in "those fine old days" of the Black Ball liners and the Liverpool trade!

Poor Shang — that was the name that fell to him in playful allusion to the fact that he had been made a victim to the "Shanghaeing" process, as it was called — had been drugged and brought on board helpless by Dago Joe to make up our full complement.

When we came to choose watches that evening Shang fell to me; he was left until the last, and Mr. Achley said, "Well, Mr. Kelson, you allowed Joe to bring this duffer on board, and it 's only fair that you should take him in your watch. *I* don't want him!"

Shang, as I found out by questioning him, had gone out that Christmas Eve in New Orleans to buy a few little presents for their Christmas-tree. He was a poor journeyman tailor, a German who had come to this country from his native village of Pyrmont, several years ago, had married a fellow-countrywoman, Lisbeth, and they had one child, — a crippled girl, Greta, — whom the little man loved with his whole heart; and for her he had gone out to purchase something with his scanty, hard-earned wages, paid him that day.

He had stepped into a beer saloon for "*ein glas bier*," as he said, had drunk it, felt

drowsy, and — "Gott in Himmel, gnädiger Herr, nothing more know I more till I find myself in this strange ship! When think you, sir, we will get there — where we go — is it perhaps far?"

When I told poor Shang the real facts of the case, and that it would be months before he could again see his Lisbeth and Greta, the poor fellow was dumb with horror, and I almost feared he would make away with himself.

I did the best I could to make life endurable for the poor wretch. An old thick suit of mine he deftly made over for himself, and some of his shipmates helped him out with a few other clothes. But, even with the best intention, I could not make a sailor of poor Shang, — it was not in him, for he was a most helpless lubber, — and that was the misery of it.

He had been shipped and entered on our ship's articles as an able seaman, and Joe had received sixteen dollars of monthly wages on his account. Our crew was short, at best, the winter voyage was a stormy one, and poor Shang could not be favored.

Mr. Ackley seemed to have taken an unconquerable dislike to the man from the first, and led him a dog's life, beating him unmercifully several times for his shortcomings. Aloft he must go, though he clung helplessly to the ratlines in an agony of terror.

"You alone are goot to me, lieber Herr," said the poor fellow. "I know you cannot help me more, but how can I live it? I know that I shall perish before we get there! Ach, lieber Gott, vot become of my lieblinge! Aber des Himmels Wege; sind des Himmels Wege!"

At last the long voyage was nearly at an end. Cape Clear was in sight one night as I came up to take the watch at midnight, and a very pleasant sight it was to all of us. There was a stiff all-sail breeze from the southward, and we were laying our course fairly up channel. I was looking over the quarter-rail at the light, now well abeam, as Shang came aft and drew near me.

"Is it then true, mein Herr, as they say, that we are almost there?"

"Yes, Shang, we are now almost there. If this breeze holds we will be in Liverpool day

after to-morrow. And then," I added, as I saw how anxiously he listened to me, "you can ship as a landsman, perhaps, and get back to Lisbeth and little Greta."

"Gott sei dank," he murmured, as he reverently lifted his hat, "if they have but live all this time."

I endeavored to reassure the poor fellow, and then, as the breeze was freshening, I took in the topgallant sails, and later, finding the wind still increasing, called Captain Gay, who ordered all hands called and a single reef put in the topsails.

The watch below tumbled up, the yards were clewed down, reef-tackles hauled out, and both watches went aloft to the fore-topsail. As my station as second mate was at the weather earing, I was, of course, first aloft, and had just passed my earing and sung out, "Haul out to leeward," when I noticed, to my great surprise, that the man next inside of me on the yard was Shang, who usually on such occasions was discreetly found in the bunt.

"Why, Shang," said I, "you are really getting to be a sailor."

"Ach, mein Herr," said he cheerfully, "ich

bin so glücklich und so frölich, now that I am really so near there and that I shall so soon see Lisbeth" —

A strong gust of wind struck us; there was a vicious slat of the sail that sent the heavy canvas over our heads; the ship made a desperate roll and a plunge into the rising sea, and then, as we all clung closely for our lives, the sail bellied out and filled again, — but the man next me was gone from the yard!

In the pitchy darkness of the moonless night he had fallen into the sea, and without a cry he was swept into eternity.

Poor Shang's earthly troubles were forever ended!

CHAPTER VI

TO CALIFORNIA BEFORE THE GOLD DISCOVERY

In 1846, while the Mexican War was in progress, it was decided by President Polk, acting upon the advice of Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, to send a volunteer regiment around Cape Horn to California for the occupation of that country, then a province of Mexico. In pursuance of this scheme a commission as colonel was given to a Mr. Thomas Stevenson, a well-known New York politician and a stanch Democrat, and he was authorized to raise and equip a full regiment of one thousand men, to be known as the First Regiment of California Volunteers.

It was found that three ships would be required to transport the regiment with its commissary stores and ammunition; and the Thomas H. Perkins, of which I was at the time second mate, was one of the three vessels chartered for the purpose. Accordingly we

hauled into a berth at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in September, 1846, and commenced taking in a cargo of military stores in the lower hold, while the between decks were fitted up with berths to accommodate three hundred and fifty men.

Having completed this work, we were towed into the East River, and there three full companies, H, I, and K, with a portion of Company F, were sent on board from their camps on Governor's Island. We were also notified that Colonel Stevenson and his headquarters staff would take up their quarters on board our ship for the voyage out, which gave us the distinction of being the flagship.

The men of the regiment were a tough lot of fellows. "Stevenson's Lambs," as they had been nicknamed, were recruited in and about the Five Points and the worst purlieus of the notorious Fourth Ward, and from the very first they gave their officers no end of trouble.

The officers, moreover, were but a shade better; for with the exception of the colonel's son, Captain Matthew Stevenson, who was a West Pointer, and the staff officers, who

were of the better class, the great majority of the company officers were mere ward politicians, elected by their men to their positions, and having little idea of military discipline.

The colonel had to come on board secretly at night to avoid arrest for debt, and one energetic deputy sheriff actually chased us down the harbor in an ineffectual attempt to serve a writ upon this impecunious officer.

We sailed, after many delays, very suddenly at last, under imperative orders from Washington, on the last day of September, in company with the ships Loo Choo and Susan Drew, carrying the remainder of the regiment, and all of us under the convoy of the United States sloop-of-war Preble. As she was a very dull sailer, however, we never saw her after the first day, as we ran her out of sight that night.

We had a pleasant run down to Rio Janeiro, where we put in for water and fresh provisions. Here one of the wild freaks of the Lambs was displayed.

Captain Lippitt, of Company K, was, in contrast to the other officers, quite a disciplinarian. He was not a New Yorker, but came

from Vermont, where he had superintended a military school; and neither of these facts commended him to the consideration of his men, with whom he was very unpopular. His company had abused their uniforms shamefully during the voyage, and had been especially careless in losing their dress hats overboard.

These hats were not so comfortable as the fatigue caps, and there was little doubt that, in many instances, the men lost the hats with intent. In preparation for making a suitable appearance in Rio, Captain Lippitt had found a couple of hatters in the regiment, and with infinite labor had managed to have ninety new dress hats made for his company, and they had been served out a few days before we made the land. He took great pride in the success of this effort, and bragged in a mild manner to his brother officers of the fine appearance his men would make.

The day we entered the bay of Rio the entire company appeared on deck in their new headgear, rather to the surprise of the captain, who had not given orders for full dress; but, attributing it to a desire on the part of his men to appear well, he made no comment.

As we passed under the walls of the fort which guards the entrance to the bay, where all ships are hailed as they come in, Company K at a concerted signal sprang into the rigging or upon the rail, and, giving three wild cheers, every man threw his new hat overboard!

The Bay of Rio de Janeiro was alive with nearly one hundred military hats bobbing about in a most absurd manner, while the walls of the fort were at once crowded with Brazilian soldiers attracted by this most astonishing performance.

Captain Lippitt was speechless with rage and amazement, the colonel and the other officers could not restrain their laughter; and as they could not very well punish an entire company for a bit of fun, the matter was allowed to pass with a reprimand and a stoppage of the value of the hats from the men's pay. But Captain Lippitt was not permitted to hear the last of the "battle of the hats" for the remainder of the voyage.

In Rio the three ships of our fleet met for the first time since we had parted company after leaving New York. One company of the regiment from each ship was given liberty on shore

daily, and the Brazilian police probably never had such severe duty before in their lives. Fancy three hundred New York Fourth Ward roughs adrift in a quiet foreign city, entirely unprepared for their proper reception!

It was little wonder that at last a formal protest was entered with the American Minister, Mr. Wise, against the depredations of these reckless fellows, and a request was made that no more shore liberty be granted them. It was doubtless an immense relief to the authorities, who afforded us every facility for expediting our work, when the supplies were all on board and they had seen the last of the "*Soldados Norte Americanos.*"

We parted company with our consorts with the understanding that we should rendezvous at Valparaiso. Off the Rio de la Plata we had a very heavy blow, but after that enjoyed unusually pleasant weather until we got into the latitude of Cape Horn, where, although it was December, which is summer at the antipodes, we encountered a succession of severe gales from the northwest, right in our teeth, which drove us far to the southward, and against which we could make no headway.

On Christmas Day we were in latitude 60° 05′ S. The cold was intense, it was blowing heavily, and we were plunging into a headbeat sea, close on the wind, under double reefs, when the thrilling cry, "Man overboard!" was heard. The ship was at once hove to, every one rushed on deck, and there, on the weather quarter, the figure of a man was seen rising and falling on the crest of the dark green waves. Fortunately as he passed astern some one had thrown an empty chicken coop overboard, which, drifting near him, he had managed to get hold of, and to this he was clinging for dear life.

Captain Arthur at once called for volunteers for the whaleboat, which swung on the port quarter, and a good crew was speedily selected. I was put in charge, and, watching a favorable opportunity, she was partially lowered, with us seated in her, and then the falls were let go by the run, so that as she struck the water they unreeved, for it would have been impossible in such a seaway to unhook the blocks.

We drifted clear of the quarter overhang, which was the great danger, and then, directed by signals from the ship, pulled in the direction

of the unfortunate man, who more than half the time was out of sight to us in the boat, as he went down in the hollow of the great waves.

It was severe work forcing the boat through the rough water in the very teeth of the gale, for the ship had drifted well to leeward of the man before we got the boat lowered; but my men gave way with a hearty good will, and we at last had the satisfaction of reaching the man, who was almost exhausted, as well as frozen, and dragging him in, he fell prone in the bottom of the boat.

It was not so difficult to return to the ship, as we had the wind astern; but it was an exceedingly delicate and dangerous operation to hook on and hoist the boat in, and we were nearly swamped in doing it.

Loud cheers greeted us from more than three hundred throats as we came alongside, and the boat falls were stretched out and manned by all the men that could get hold of the ropes. The surgeon of the regiment was at hand, and poured nearly a gill of raw brandy down the man's throat, and he was taken below, wrapped in a blanket, and thoroughly rubbed until the suspended circulation was once more restored.

The next day he was up and about the decks again, very thankful for his escape from a great peril.

Within twenty-four hours the wind veered around to the southward, and we soon passed the Horn and ran up into the South Pacific, exchanging the Antarctic ice for the blue skies and summer weather of the tropics. In a couple of weeks we reached Valparaiso, where we remained until, a few days later, we were joined by our consorts, when profiting by our experience in Rio Janeiro, but a small number of men were permitted to go on shore each day.

We left Valparaiso January 15, 1847, and, after an uneventful run up the coast, sighted the Farallones, off the Bay of San Francisco, on the 5th of March.

Then all was excitement ; for we had heard nothing of the condition of affairs in California since leaving New York six months before, and we did not know what reception we might encounter.

We stood in past the heads, since known as the Golden Gates, and ran up the lower bay, when suddenly we saw displayed, from a staff, on the Presidio, the American flag, and we then

knew that we were among friends. A few minutes later we sighted the fleet at anchor, with our country's flag flying from the peaks of the ships, and we ran up and anchored off the little hamlet of Yerba Buena, as what is San Francisco was then called, after a voyage of one hundred and fifty-five days.

Commodore Stockton, in the frigate Congress, was then in command of the naval forces, and the sloop-of-war Portsmouth, Captain Montgomery, was also in the harbor. A few weeks later Commodore McKean came over from China in the Razee Independence; and as our two consorts arrived a week after us, and General Kearney reached Monterey with a force of dragoons, overland, it will be seen that the United States was in overpowering force in California.

We discharged our government stores, carrying them ashore in our boats and landing them on the beach near Clark's Point, in the manner described by Dana in his "Two Years Before the Mast;" for everything was very primitive at Yerba Buena in those days, and it would have required a very vivid imagination to conceive that the bay would within a

lifetime be lined with wharves, and that a superb city of several hundred thousand inhabitants was to replace the cluster of half a dozen adobe houses we saw before us.

Our cargo out, we took in a sufficient quantity of sand ballast, and in June sailed for Manila. Within a week after getting off the coast of California, we struck the southeast trades, and had a most delightful run across the Pacific Ocean, the wind scarcely varying a couple of points for six weeks, when we sighted Guam, one of the Ladrone Islands. As scurvy had made its appearance among our crew, Captain Arthur decided to anchor and lay in a supply of fruit and vegetables. The natives soon came off to us with quantities of limes, yams, and cocoanuts, which they gladly exchanged for any articles of hardware we could spare.

The following day we got under weigh and stood to the westward for the Straits of St. Bernardino. At midnight breakers were seen close on the weather bow. We wore ship instantly to the eastward and hauled close on the wind for an hour and a quarter, the wind not permitting us to lay better than east half south. At

1.45 A. M. we tacked to the southward, and hoped to weather this reef, which we had not found set down on our chart; but at 3.15 breakers were again seen on the weather bow too near to allow us to tack. We accordingly wore, and when before the wind the ship struck under the forefoot and remained stationary. The wind was S. S. E., and fortunately the water was as smooth as a mill-pond.

We furled all sails, and I was sent by Captain Arthur in the cutter to sound around the ship. I found the eastern edge of the reef on which we lay to be very steep, with shelves projecting beyond each other as it deepened. These edges were of very sharp and ragged coral, descending so rapidly as scarcely to allow room to lay an anchor on.

The reef was about one mile and a quarter in length from north to south, and perhaps one hundred and fifty yards in breadth from east to west, and in the form of a crescent. Its concave side to the eastward was that on which we lay, nearly in the centre, with our bow pointing directly over the reef. Under our jib-boom there was but five feet of water; under the stern eleven feet; under the fore chains fifteen

feet on the port side and thirty feet on the starboard side, and under the main chains four fathoms on one side and eight fathoms on the other.

Returning and reporting these facts, Captain Arthur had all our boats hoisted out and a kedge anchor laid under the port quarter in deep water, and a hawser attached to it and taken to the capstan and hove taut. The stream anchor was next laid on the starboard bow and its cable hove taut. All three boats were manned and attached to a tow-line from the bowsprit end. The jib, spanker, and stay-sails were loosed ready for hoisting.

By eleven o'clock the wind veered to the southwest and became squally, the tide began to flow and the swell to heave. At 11.30 the ship began to move, but just then the hawser parted. Captain Arthur immediately ordered the boats to pull away about forty-five degrees abaft the starboard beam; the breeze freshened and gave a greater impulse to the strain of the stream cable, and, to our delight, the ship launched off and got sternway, which, the boats assisting, swung her around on her heel with her head to the northward.

"Cut away the stream cable, Mr. Kelson!" shouted the captain, half wild with excitement.

The ship swung so as to bring the wind on the starboard quarter.

"Hoist away on the spanker, put the helm down!" She came to on the starboard tack. "Hoist away jib, main and main-topgallant staysails! Be lively, sir!"

Every one bent to the work with a hearty good-will; the good ship gathered headway; the boats came alongside.

"Aloft, men, and loose topsails and courses!" called out the captain.

The topsails were mastheaded, and the courses set as rapidly as possible, and we just shaved the reef, not more than five feet from its knife-like edge. Had we struck broadside on, it would have been the last of the ship, and, for the matter of that, of us also.

Thank God! we were clear of the reef, losing in the effort our stream and kedge anchors and a couple of hawsers, which we gladly relinquished in our joy at this narrow escape from wreck.

We steered N. N. W. between two other

long reefs, which broke white as we passed them, and at last emerged to clear water, and again shaped our course for the straits. A week later, we anchored at the mouth of the Pasig in the beautiful Bay of Manila.

The city of Manila, on the island of Luzon, is the capital of the Philippine Islands, one of the most highly cherished of the Spanish possessions. It is the residence of the viceroy, who, at this great distance from home, is in everything but name a reigning monarch, and, indeed, supports almost as much state as his royal master in Madrid.

The bay is superb, almost as fine as that of Rio de Janeiro, and the city itself is much more curious and interesting to the traveler than Rio. The River Pasig divides the city, one portion, which is walled, being devoted almost exclusively to the palaces of the viceroy and the archbishop, the Hall of Audience, the military barracks, and innumerable churches and convents. Outside of the walls, along the shore of the bay, is the beautiful drive, the Calzada, where all the fashionable world drive in the cool of the evening, while the bands play choice selections of operatic music.

On the other side of the river is the residential quarter and the shops. The population was then about one hundred and fifty thousand, of which more than three quarters were natives, the ruling class and the aristocracy being of Spanish birth.

One of the many sights in Manila was the enormous government cheroot factory, where nearly twenty thousand people, mostly women, are employed.

We loaded here with hemp and sugar, which we carried home to Boston by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, having an uneventful passage of one hundred and sixty-five days to Boston Light.

CHAPTER VII

RECAPTURING A RUNAWAY

I DID not long remain as second mate, for the very next voyage the chief mate was lost overboard one morning from the top of the poop-house. The watch were about to set the spanker, and Mr. Brown, who had the watch, was standing very imprudently to leeward of the boom, when the last turns of the gasket were thrown off and the gaff flying over struck him in the head with great violence and knocked him over the quarter-rail.

The ship was at once hove to, and a boat was lowered, but nothing was seen of him, and the supposition was that he was stunned by the blow and sunk at once, to rise no more.

So I was promoted to his place; and although full young to assume the responsibilities attendant upon the position, I managed to satisfy the captain so well that when we arrived in port I was confirmed in the place. About a year

later I was sent for to go as chief mate in the Laodicea, another ship belonging to the same firm. In this vessel I made a voyage to the East Indies.

Early in 1848, while in New York, I received a letter from the owners requesting me to come on to Boston and take command of the Mystic, a fine new ship of nearly one thousand tons, lately launched at East Boston and fitting out for a voyage to Valparaiso.

So my cousin, the owner, had fulfilled his promise, and before I was twenty-one years of age I was to have command of a fine half-clipper ship. I wasted no time, but went on to Boston as speedily as possible, where I found my ship at Commercial Wharf and work already commenced on her lading.

I at once assumed the command; and as the owners were very anxious to get the ship to sea in the shortest time possible, I pushed things to the extent of my ability and secured as officers a Mr. King, whom I had known for several years as an experienced and thoroughly trustworthy man, as chief mate, and a Mr. Robinson, whom I did not know personally, but who brought me such excellent recommen-

dations that I engaged him on the strength of them, as second mate. That I did not more closely examine into the character of this man was a very unfortunate oversight, as it afterward proved.

In due time our cargo was all in, and in addition, seventy thousand dollars in Spanish dollars, packed in kegs, came on board, which was to be used on owner's account for the purchase of a cargo of copper at Coquimbo. These kegs were stowed away under the immediate direction of Mr. Robinson, who was in charge of the work, well down in the after run.

As one of the frequent South American revolutions was then in progress in Chili, my orders from the owners were that if I could not get a cargo of copper I should go over to China and report to Russell & Sturgis, who would invest my silver in a cargo of tea for Boston.

On the 5th of December we were ready for sea; and after clearing at the Custom House and receiving my last orders from my owners, I went on board and proceeded to sea.

Our run down to Cape Horn was prosperous and very uneventful, and we had remarkably fine weather. After passing through the

Straits of Le Mar, however, we fell into a heavy gale from the westward, and for several days laid to under close sail. By the third day of the gale the sea was running heavily. That day just before noon the clouds lifted, and Mr. King sent a boy into the cabin to tell me that he thought there would be an opportunity to get a meridian altitude.

As we had not been able to get an observation for several days, I hurried on deck with my sextant. Just as I had braced myself against the port rail, the man at the wheel carelessly let the ship yaw, and a great wave that must have weighed tons came aboard, smashing the starboard quarter boat to flinders, dashing in the cabin skylight, and sweeping the decks in a terrible manner.

By great good fortune I had taken a turn of a rope about my waist to steady me for getting a sight; and by clinging on with both hands I managed to retain my position, but Mr. King, who was quite near me, was washed away and thrown with fearful violence across the deck and into the lee scuppers.

Fortunately no one was washed overboard, but on investigation we found that poor Mr.

King was seriously injured. Two of his ribs were broken, and it was evident that he had also received some severe internal injuries, the extent of which I could not then determine.

He was carefully taken below to his state-room, and I did all I could to relieve his sufferings, which were very great. That night the wind veered and moderated, and we made sail and were soon in the waters of the Pacific, standing to the westward with favoring winds and smooth seas.

On the 2d of March, at 9 A. M., we made the Point of Angels, and, bearing up for the entrance to the Bay of Valparaiso, stood in and anchored close to the lower batteries. I at once went on shore and reported to the Aduaña, and then made arrangements to have Mr. King sent to the hospital.

Going on board again, I told him what I had done and assured him that it would be necessary to have such careful medical and surgical attention as he could receive only in a hospital.

"I am perfectly aware of that, Captain Kelson," said he. "I know that I can't stay here on board, and I doubt if I shall ever be much

more use as an officer of a ship; but there is one thing I must do before I leave the ship, and that is to warn you against putting too much trust in Mr. Robinson!"

"Why, Mr. King! what is the matter with him? He is a good sailor, and he appears to carry on the duty very well!"

"Oh yes, sir, he is a good sailor-man; no one can deny that; but I don't trust him. He has too much palaver with the men. I am sure there is something wrong about him. What it is, unfortunately, I don't know; I wish I did. But you are a younger man than I am, captain, and more confiding in your nature. Now I beg of you not to put too much confidence in Mr. Robinson!"

I thought it quite possible that this was merely prejudice on the part of my mate, increased by his anxiety at leaving the ship, so to ease his mind I said: "Oh, well, Mr. King, I will keep my eye on him, and I shall hope that you will soon be able to return to duty again. Now keep yourself perfectly quiet and get well as quickly as possible."

After sending my mate on shore, I made Mr. Robinson, who seemed to be doing very

well, chief mate temporarily, and put one of my best men in charge of the second mate's watch. Engaging lighters, I then commenced discharging my cargo, which, as the goods I had happened to be in demand, sold rapidly and to excellent advantage. But when it came to arranging for my cargo of copper, I found that it would be necessary for me to make a visit to the capital, Santiago, to confer with the authorities in regard to a permit for export.

Accordingly I made arrangements with my consignees in Valparaiso to keep an oversight on my ship; and after leaving very strict orders with Mr. Robinson in regard to the care of the vessel, I started on horseback for Santiago.

With the positive genius for delay that characterizes Spanish American officials, I was detained at the capital for several weeks, badgered about from one department to another; but at last I succeeded in obtaining the desired permit, and returned to Valparaiso.

As I dismounted from my horse in the courtyard of my hotel, I met my good friend Don José Altimara. "Ah!" said he, "I am

glad that you have returned. All your goods are sold and well sold. Have you obtained your permit to export copper?"

I told him of my various trials and final success.

"That is well. But tell me, why have you sent your ship away so suddenly? I fear you will have trouble with the authorities, as you had no clearance papers."

"What do you mean? The Mystic sailed!"

"I mean," said Don José, "that the Mystic left this port a week ago at night, and with no notice given at the Aduaña."

I did not stop for another word, but hurried to the mole to convince myself that my friend was mistaken, as I was sure he must be. Eagerly I scanned the bay, searching for my ship, but she was not there! She was gone; of that there was no manner of doubt. But *where* could she have gone? and why should Mr. Robinson have taken such a strange course?

Beyond the slight suspicion created by the vague impressions of Mr. King, I had found no reason for doubting the probity of this officer. But I was soon to be enlightened; for as I

stood gazing out over the bay, a rough-looking fellow dressed like a sailor, with a half-healed scar running transversely across his face, that looked like the mark of a recent knife wound, touched me on the shoulder to rouse me from my reverie, and said, "Is this Captain Kelson?"

"Yes, my man," I replied; "what do you want of me?"

"Well, sir," said he, with a half sneer, "I think it's more than likely you will want something of *me!*"

"What should I want of you, then?"

"Don't you want to find your ship?"

"Why, what do you know about her?"

"Well, captain, I know *all* about her, and I am ready to tell you the whole story; and what is more, I'll help you to find her."

"I will pay you well for it, my lad, if you can indeed do so," I replied eagerly.

"Well, I don't object to that, but I shall do it, not so much for love of you or your money, as to get even with Jack Robinson for the dirty trick he played me!"

"Jack Robinson! Do you know Mr. Robinson?"

"Aye do I! We were shipmates together in the old Palmetto, of Boston, three years ago. He didn't have a handle to his name then. We were both in the forecastle. You never heard of the Palmetto getting into port, did you, captain?"

"No; it was supposed that she was lost off Cape Horn, with all hands; she was never heard from."

"No; and she never will be. When I have helped you to find the Mystic and have got square with Jack Robinson, perhaps I may tell you what became of the Palmetto."

"Well, never mind about her; what can you tell me about my own ship?"

"I 'll tell you, sir, if you will give me time. Three weeks ago Jack met me here ashore. I had been beach-combing for six months and I was dead broke. Jack was flush and paid for the *aguardiente* like a man. One day he said, 'Look here, Charlie, I 've got a devilish sight better lay here than we had with the old Palmetto, and an easier job; do you want to go in with me?' Naturally I was ready for anything that promised well; and when Jack took me on board ship, showed me those kegs down

in the after run, and told me they were all full of silver dollars, I was red hot to get hold of them and ready for anything!"

"You are frank, at any rate."

The fellow laughed and continued: "Jack told me his plan. It was simple enough. He wanted me to pick up half a dozen reckless fellows like myself, who could be depended upon, and who would join us for a fair price. Then, on the first dark night, we would slip the cable, put to sea, and carry the Mystic to an island we both know of, that has water and cocoanuts but no inhabitants, — well, if you must know, the same place where we laid the old Palmetto's bones, — and then get rid of the rest of the crew, according to a clever plan he had, and divide the spoil between us two!"

"And how comes it, then, that you are here and the ship gone?"

"That is the deviltry that I am coming to. A week ago yesterday we had everything ready. I had sent aboard half a dozen fellows who were ready for anything that would put a handful of doubloons in their pockets. Jack told the old crew that you had ordered these men shipped to help in loading copper at

Coquimbo, and they were pleased at the prospect of more help in the work. Jack and I were ashore for the last time, waiting for night to come, so that we could cut the cable and run. We had both taken our share of grog, but Jack had taken a deal less than I. That I had noticed, and it ought to have made me suspicious. At eleven o'clock we started from the *pulqueria* for the beach; but as I turned the first corner, Jack dropped a bit behind, and at the same moment I felt his knife running in between my ribs, and as I turned he gave me this slash over the head, and I fell in the street with a shout of 'Murder!'

"The patrol came along and Jack scuttled off! Well, sir, I was carried to the hospital, where I have been ever since, and I had a narrow squeak for it; but I pulled through at last, and now I am ready to pilot you to Amatavi Island, as soon as you can get something to go in, to hunt up your ship!"

The fellow's story carried conviction in the telling; it was verified by the police, so far as they were concerned, and by old Francisco, in whose *pulqueria* all the nefarious business had been planned.

My good friend Altimara, to whom I went with the strange tale, was now of the greatest assistance in various ways. He found, at my suggestion, a fast-sailing schooner with a good armament, that had lately returned to Valparaiso from a smuggling voyage up the coast. She could be chartered just as she was, manned and all ready for sea, excepting her stores.

I made the round of my customers; and after stating my desperate case, they at once settled their various bills for the goods they had purchased, paying me in silver, in all nearly sixty thousand dollars. I then laid in a sufficient supply of stores for a voyage of four months; and obtaining the necessary papers for my vessel from the government officials, who were all very sympathetic, I took Charlie on board as pilot, and sailed from Valparaiso with a fair wind, on the 6th of May, in search of my runaway ship.

I found my schooner all that I could have wished: she was very fast and easily handled; and the crew, which was largely made up of runaway men-of-war's men, were familiar with the use of the great guns and well drilled in small arms.

I explained to them the object of our voyage and what I hoped and expected to accomplish, and assured them that if we succeeded in overhauling and capturing the Mystic, they should receive one hundred dollars each as prize money, in addition to their wages. But I told them at the same time that very possibly we might have a sharp fight, for I knew Mr. Robinson was a desperate man and had everything at stake.

The men cheered at the end of my speech, and promised to go wherever I led them, and I saw that they meant what they said.

From the description Charlie gave of the island where he said Robinson had intended taking the Mystic, I found that it laid in latitude 2° 21′ S., longitude 146° 04′ E., and that it was doubtless one of the Admiralty Islands, which were little known to navigators at that time.

We made an excellent run, and at noon on June 30 I found by a good observation that we were probably about forty miles to the southward of the island we were seeking; and as we were then making about seven knots an hour, I felt sure we should sight the land be-

fore night. The excitement of the chase and the preparation for a possible fight had thus far kept me up, but now that I was so soon to know the result of this attempt I was making to recover the property of my owners, and should either reinstate myself in their good opinion or return to Boston a ruined man, I acknowledge for the first time my courage almost failed me.

What if, after all, I should be on the wrong track! This fellow might have deceived me, or, in his turn, might have been deceived by that craftier villain, my former mate! However, I should soon know the worst — or the best!

By three o'clock we raised the land bearing N. 31° W., a cluster of low, flat, woody islands. By four o'clock a large, high island bore N. 18° W., its outline forming a hollow like a saddle. It appeared to be surrounded with smaller islands on the south and west sides. At the same time an extensive reef was observed stretching to the southward.

I decided to haul to windward of the southeastern islet then in sight, and, by Charlie's advice, to pass between it and the next island to

the northwest, which he recognized, and where the channel was to all appearances, perfectly clear and about four or five miles wide.

At 6 P. M. I anchored in six fathoms of water about two miles from the land, as I did not dare to run in the midst of these reefs at night. As soon as the men had eaten their supper, I ordered three boats cleared away and armed, and with muffled oars we all started from the schooner, my boat, with Charlie as pilot, ahead.

The moon did not rise until late, but there was sufficient light for us to make our way, and, after four hours' steady work at the oars, we gained the entrance to a little land-locked bay at the head of the channel between the two easternmost islands.

Here we laid on our oars until about three o'clock in the morning, and then pulled in shore. As we opened up the entrance to the bay I almost set up a shout of joy; for there, swinging quietly at her anchor, a cable's length from shore, was my old ship!

I gathered my three boats together and asked my men if they would stand by me in an attempt to board the ship. They assured me

of their readiness, and seemed to look upon the whole affair as a good joke.

I warned them not to fire a shot until we were fairly on board, and then to trust mainly to their cutlasses; for I felt sure we could surprise the ship at this early hour when the crew would be in their deepest sleep, and I knew if we once succeeded in getting on board, we could carry her.

I divided the boats, giving them orders to pull one for the bow, one for the starboard quarter, while I would board on the port side amidships, thus taking them in flank if there should be any resistance. We then pulled quietly into the little bay, and as the tide was running flood, quickly approached the ship. As I had anticipated, there was no lookout kept, as they evidently fancied themselves entirely safe from an attack by sea and the island was uninhabited.

We all kept in range until quite near, then made a dash alongside, and most of us had actually gained the deck before any alarm was given. Then it was too late for any organized resistance. I shot the first man who came up the fore hatch. Charlie cut down another as

he appeared from the cabin companionway, and we then clapped the hatch bar on the fore scuttle, and, after closing the companionway, we had the whole party fast as rats in a trap.

In the first moments of exultation that followed our victory I thought our work was practically accomplished, but I soon learned that although I had scotched the snake I had not yet killed him. For as I came aft from seeing the forward hatch barred down, I was saluted by a well-aimed musket shot that passed through my hat and grazed my scalp, while at the same time another shot from the same quarter struck poor Charlie full in the chest, bringing him to the deck with a mortal wound.

"Jack Robinson has made a sure thing of it with me this time, captain. I saw him as he fired from the skylight," whispered the poor fellow, as I kneeled down by his side. "But I have got even with him, Cap., and I brought you here as I promised you I would!"

But the bullets were flying too thick to spend much time with a dying man, so I drew him

forward out of range of the skylight, from which they were keeping up a fusillade. As the magazine was in the after-cabin the pirates, for such of course they were, had the command of an unlimited supply of ammunition and plenty of arms, and were in a very difficult position to dislodge.

To add to our annoyance they opened fire on our boats from the ship's stern windows. Indeed, it seemed to be a veritable case of capturing a Tartar, and for a time I was rather nonplussed as to the manner in which I should reap the fruit of my incomplete victory.

The first thing to do was evidently to protect ourselves from this galling fire from the cabin skylight. So I stationed two men in the mizzen rigging with orders to fire down the skylight at any one they could see, and I then sent two other men aloft; and after cutting the spanker adrift we let the peak and throat halyards go by the run, and the heavy sail tumbled down on the skylight, very effectually shutting the occupants of the cabin out from a sight of the deck.

By this time the men who were barred down in the forecastle were pleading to be released,

shouting out that they surrendered. So we opened one side of the hatch and allowed them to come out, one at a time, slipping handcuffs on each man as he appeared.

By the time this had been accomplished the sun had risen, and we felt the need of some breakfast after our all-night work. The cook was one of those who came up from the forecastle; and when he found that his old captain was once again in command of the ship, he was loud in his expressions of delight. Mr. Robinson, as he said, had led him and the members of the old crew a dog's life since he had run away with the ship, and moreover they had a well-grounded belief that he purposed dealing foully with them now that he had got the ship safe in this unknown bay.

The cook bustled about and soon had a savory breakfast ready for us of fresh fish, of which they had caught an abundance in the bay, with hot coffee and ship bread, which we thoroughly enjoyed.

I went with a pot of coffee to poor Charlie, thinking he might perhaps take some; but he was already dead, and I covered him up with a boat sail and left him at rest.

After breakfast I sent the cook below as a messenger to Mr. Robinson, offering terms for his surrender. The fellow was intrenched in such a way as to be able to cause us great annoyance, so I agreed to give him the ship's cutter, with her sails and oars, and provisions for himself and the Valparaiso men. I also offered to land him and these men on the island unharmed. He was to take no arms with him, but I agreed to leave a couple of muskets and some ammunition on the reef at the entrance of the harbor, where he could get them after our departure.

At first he was disinclined to accept these terms and blustered a great deal, threatening to blow up the ship, with all of us on board, unless I made a more liberal offer; but I was firm and gave him to understand that I did not fear his threats and that all the old crew had already surrendered at discretion. This last news settled the matter, and he consented to my terms.

I then addressed my old crew and gave them their choice, either to remain in the ship or to go on shore with the mate. They at once, to a man, decided to stay by the ship,

assuring me that they would be only too glad to be rid of Mr. Robinson and his Valparaiso beach-combers, who had tyrannized over them completely.

That afternoon, after giving poor Charlie a sailor's burial, I got the schooner into the bay and alongside the Mystic, and transferred the specie from her hold to my ship's run, where it was placed by the side of the other treasure, which had not yet been tampered with.

I then settled the charges for the schooner, paid the men I had hired their prize money, and, after thanking them for their brave support, we parted company, the schooner standing to the southward for the coast of Chili, while I laid my course in the Mystic N. N. W. for Hongkong.

CHAPTER VIII

CHASED BY PIRATES

We made an excellent run over to China after striking into the southeast trades, and sixty days after leaving the Admiralty Islands we anchored off Hongkong.

I at once went on shore and reported to Russell & Sturgis, and learned that we had arrived in a good time. There were very few ships in port, teas were low in price and very good in quality, and the consignee said that he could secure me some very desirable chops at reasonable rates, and that if we had any room remaining after investing my owner's silver, that he could fill me up with cargo, on freight, at remunerative rates.

This was indeed good news, and I proceeded to land my specie, which the firm at once invested; and after thoroughly cleaning out and fumigating my hold, a quantity of sampan wood was sent off for dunnage, and we com-

menced receiving and storing our cargo of tea.

Soon after my arrival I was visited by Captain Archer, late in command of the ship Essex, of Salem. Captain Archer had lost his ship a few months before on a reef while trading among the Fiji Islands, and he was anxious to obtain a passage home for himself, officers, and crew.

As I was very shorthanded, having lost both my mates, Mr. King and Mr. Robinson, whose places I had temporarily supplied from my crew, I was very glad to ship his two officers, and I arranged for his crew to work their passage home in the Mystic. I had a spare stateroom in the cabin, which I placed at the disposal of Captain Archer.

He was a veteran shipmaster, and had been in command before I was born, but he had decided, since his late misfortune in losing his ship, that this should be his last voyage. He had had many years' experience in the Indian Seas, and particularly in the Fijis, where he had traded for *bèche de mer*, a marine delicacy which the Chinese esteemed so highly that it was not infrequently sold for its weight in silver.

The captain was full of stories of Thakombau, the savage chief of Bau, one of the Fiji group. This chief was a most terrible old cannibal, who, not satisfied with devouring the enemies captured in his raids on the neighboring islands, frequently ordered the massacre of his own people, when he was desirous of having a grand feast, and they were baked and eaten. "Long pig" he facetiously designated his human sacrifices.

The captain assured me that these dreadful orgies were not, as I had supposed, religious rites, but were simply for the satisfaction of a depraved appetite, and that in the gratification of this taste nothing was sacred.

And yet the captain had succeeded in inspiring a friendship in the breast of this old savage that had caused him to issue an edict making the captain strictly taboo, and no native dared to harm him, while the choicest canoe loads of *bèche de mer* were brought off to him for trade. Thakombau actually proposed to make Captain Archer a chief and to give him the island of Viti for his very own, but the captain declined the tempting offer.

It must be confessed, however, that this

gentle treatment had had its effect upon the captain, who did not seem to think the cannibal chief was nearly so much of a brute as he was generally considered by Europeans.

I can scarcely realize that since that time such a marvelous change has taken place in the condition of the Fijians. The missionaries managed to gain a foothold in the islands soon after the time of which I am writing, and now there are Christian churches in every island of the group, several thousand professing Christians among the natives, absolute safety for white residents everywhere, and cannibalism is utterly unknown!

While the loading of my ship was progressing, in company with Captain Archer I made a visit to Canton, which is about one hundred miles above Hongkong. This was only a couple of years after the siege of Canton by the Triad rebels, and the breaches that had been made by them in the wall that surrounded Canton, six miles in extent, had not yet been repaired.

We passed a week at Russell & Sturgis's hong, and had a very pleasant time exploring the curious city under the charge of one of his

native clerks, who took us into many of the labyrinths of the "Old City" not usually penetrated by the Fanquis, as they called their foreign visitors.

We made many purchases of curios, at prices that would now seem marvelously low, and returned to Hongkong, at the expiration of our visit, loaded down with presents for our friends at home.

Our lading was completed and the hatches calked down early in October, and we sailed on the 10th of the month, in time to take advantage of the northeast monsoon. We were favored with light winds from N. N. E. to N. E. after passing the Great Ladrone, and on the 30th entered Banca Straits, where the wind veered to the southeast and fell very light.

At night we anchored; and as that part of the Malayan coast in those days bore an unenviable reputation for pirates, I not only maintained a regular sea watch, but divided the time with Captain Archer, so that one of us in turn should be on deck all night. And to this precaution, as it turned out, we owed our subsequent preservation from a great peril.

Just before daylight Captain Archer came to me, where I was sleeping on the break of the poop, and aroused me, saying that there were some suspicious looking sails in sight.

I sprang up, and although it was not yet light I could readily see with my night glass two proas coming out from under the land a few miles to the northward.

I at once ordered all hands called, and as the wind had got round northeast, although still light, I immediately got under weigh and made all sail. Meanwhile the proas were standing down toward us, and as the daylight broke it was evident that they were full of men.

The Mystic, as was quite common in those days, carried a couple of 24-pounders, with a fair amount of ammunition, and we had, in addition to the ship's muskets, the rifles I had purchased in fitting out the schooner at Valparaiso, when I started in pursuit of my runaway ship. So we were unusually well prepared in that direction, and, having Captain Archer's crew, we were nearly doubly manned.

Still, so far as force was concerned, we were outnumbered by the Malays in the proas five to one. For we could see that they fairly

swarmed with men, and it was evident that in a hand-to-hand fight we should have much the worst of it. It would never do to let them get on board of us.

"We shall have to fight those devils, Kelson," said Captain Archer, "unless the breeze freshens pretty quickly. They are gaining on us hand over hand; and they are getting out sweeps now, I believe. Yes; by Jove they are!" he exclaimed, looking through his glass. "It won't do to let them get alongside; there are two of them, and they will take us on both sides and carry us by sheer force of numbers! Had n't we better open the ball?"

"Yes; I think that fellow ahead is already within safe range. You look out for the ship, and I will try my hand at a shot or two. Now, sir; luff her up carefully, but don't get her aback, and I will bring this gun to bear!"

The old gentleman went aft and took his stand by the wheel. "Put your helm down, my man; look out, Captain Kelson! Let draw the head sheets! Meet her with the helm; meet her!"

The Mystic came up in the wind, the head sails flapped; I watched my chance, got a

good sight with the gun, which was loaded with a solid shot, and pulled the lock-string!

As the smoke blew to leeward I sprang on the rail, and as our ship payed off and the sails filled, the foremast of the leading proa snapped off a few feet above the deck and fell overboard with a great crash, dragging with it the heavy lateen sail!

"Good shot, Kelson!" shouted Captain Archer from the poop; "that fellow has got his hands full of work and is out of the game for the present!" And our men set up a hearty cheer at this sudden and unexpected discomfiture of our adversary.

We supposed that the other proa would heave to and go to the assistance of her companion, but that evidently was not her intention, for she passed her without pausing, and with her sweeps out and heavily manned she bore rapidly down upon us.

I ordered the starboard gun run over on the port side and tried several shots at the approaching proa, but, although I hit her once, I did not seem to inflict any very serious damage, so I had both guns loaded with shrapnel and langridge, and determined to have the fight out at closer quarters.

Stationing both my officers and the carpenter, who was a splendid shot, on the quarter-deck with rifles, I ordered them to pick off the men who seemed to be the leaders, and then waited for the approach of the proa.

When she had crept up within easy rifle range, I luffed the ship up, as before, and getting a deliberate aim at the crowded deck, depressed the guns and fired them at the word, both at once, point blank, reloading and repeating the dose before the smoke of the first discharge had cleared away.

The effect of this murderous fire, at such close quarters, upon the crowd massed upon the proa's deck was terrific, and the slaughter was frightful. Yet, by some strange chance, the captain, a tall, vicious-looking Malay, stripped to the waist and waving a naked kreese to encourage his followers, had escaped uninjured, and was shouting to his men, to rally them, with the evident intent of boarding us.

Captain Archer had meanwhile filled our ship away, but the wind was light, and before we had fairly gained headway the proa, with sweeps out, shot under our starboard quarter,

and a grapnel thrown from her caught in our mizzen channels.

The pirate captain at once sprang forward, and, with his kreese in his mouth, scrambled up our side, followed by a score of his men, and gained the poop deck of the ship!

Abandoning our battery, we gathered in the waist, and I called to the carpenter to pick off the Malay captain. He nodded, and, taking a careful sight, fired, and the Malayan fell dead among his men. Our other riflemen were meanwhile dropping those of the proa who had followed their captain.

Just then the wind freshened, and by great good fortune the proa's grapnel disengaged itself and she dropped astern.

Calling upon my men, we made a dash upon the few remaining Malays and fairly drove them overboard. I then put the helm down, and as we came round on the other tack and gathered headway, I stood down on the proa, a good wrap full, and striking her fair and square amidships cut her to the water's edge.

Our victory was now complete, and as the first proa, having disentangled herself from the wreck of her foremast, was coming down,

with sweeps out, to rescue the survivors of her consort, I made all sail and kept on my course, leaving them to their own devices.

The next day we fell in with a Dutch man-of-war brig, lately out from Batavia. I reported the affair to her, and she made all sail for the straits in hopes of capturing the pirates, who, if they were caught, would have received a short shrift, for the Dutch were very active in the suppression of piracy in those waters.

The 15th of November we passed through the Straits of Sunda and laid our course to the westward. The wind continued generally from the southeast, but it was extremely variable, and on the 18th it increased to a brisk whole sail breeze, attended with showers and occasional squalls.

That night the barometer went down in a most astonishing manner and the sea rose without any seeming cause, for the wind was not heavy, while the air was close and the temperature unusually sultry.

"What do you think of it, Captain Archer?" said I, as we both looked at the barometer in the cabin.

"I think we are about to have some nasty

weather. It would not surprise me if we caught the tail end of a typhoon."

"That is exactly my idea, captain, and I hope you won't laugh at me when I tell you that I am going to take in sail and prepare for it!"

"Not a bit of it, my dear fellow. An ounce of prevention may be worth tons of after care. With such a low barometer as that, you are justified in doing anything for the safety of your ship."

I went on deck at once. "Mr. Ireson," said I to the chief mate, "call all hands, send down all three of those royal yards, and house the masts. Take in the main-topgallant sail, close-reef the topsails, and put a reef in both the courses. And don't waste any time about it, sir. The glass is very low and still falling, and I believe that we shall have some heavy weather before morning."

The mate looked rather surprised at these orders, but he saw that I was in earnest and proceeded to carry them out. The wind soon commenced freshening, but with our double crew the work was speedily accomplished, and by the time that all was snug the wind had

chopped round and came out howling from the southward and eastward. In consequence of our timely preparation, however, we were ready for it.

The gale continued to increase, and on the third day we hove to under close-reefed maintopsail and reefed foresail, under which sail the ship made good weather, although the sea was running very heavily indeed.

Just before midnight the wind suddenly fell, and for a few minutes it was almost calm. It was intensely dark, the sky was as black as night, not a star was seen through the dense clouds, and the sails flapped in an ominous manner.

Then, in a moment, as though all the powers of the wind-god had been loosed, the gale struck us with infernal force, accompanied with torrents of rain and the most vivid chain lightning, which played about the ship till it seemed as though she must be on fire; the thunder pealing like a park of artillery!

The two sails we had set bellied, and with one flap fairly blew out of the bolt ropes. For a moment I thought the ship would surely founder, for she went almost on her beam ends,

trembled like a live thing, and then, relieved by the loss of the sails, slowly recovered herself and came up again to the wind.

I had been in many severe gales in these latitudes, but I had never experienced anything like the tremendous power of this wind: the waves were fairly beaten down, which had been running half mast high after the three days' heavy gale.

With the aid of a dozen men we succeeded with great difficulty in getting a stout tarpaulin in the weather mizzen rigging, and this was quite sufficient to keep the ship's head to the wind.

One by one every sail in the ship was blown from the yards, although they were furled, and, in some cases, storm-furled with extra gaskets. But the wind seemed to cut like a knife, and we could see by the lightning flashes the long ribbons of canvas streaming out and then disappearing to leeward. Had I not seen this I would not have believed it possible.

All of us, officers and men, were lashed to the weather rail, absolutely helpless, so far as our own exertions were concerned, and utterly unable to communicate with each other, as no

trumpet could be heard above this wild discord of the winds and waves. No man dared leave his place lest he should be washed or blown overboard.

At about two o'clock in the morning we shipped a heavy sea, and two large, full water casks lashed amidships broke adrift and dashed from side to side, with every roll of the ship, with appalling violence, threatening to stave in our bulwarks.

It seemed certain death for any one to attempt to secure these casks, and yet it was equally certain they would do us great mischief if they were permitted to dash about in this manner.

At last one of them became temporarily blocked by some spare spars and coils of rope in the lee scuppers, and the carpenter, with a life-line attached to his waist, succeeded in staving in one of the heads of the cask, thus rendering it harmless. Watching his opportunity when the other cask came over to leeward, he was equally fortunate and staved it also, to our great relief.

The ship, meanwhile, was laboring very heavily, straining and groaning as she pitched

and rolled, as helpless as a log in the heavy trough of the sea, and it was evident that her seams were opening, as we found on sounding the well that there was more than a foot of water in the hold.

"Pray God the gale may break with daylight, Kelson," said Captain Archer, who was lashed close to me, as he saw the sounding rod drawn up from the pumps.

"Yes, sir, the old barkey won't stand many more hours of this hammering and twisting. If the gale does n't break with daylight I fear we shall never see Boston again!"

With difficulty I worked my way into the cabin, to look at the barometer we had been consulting so anxiously all night. It had certainly stopped falling! Yes, and better still, the surface of the bulb was at last convex! That was at least hopeful. I returned to the deck and reported the news to my companion.

"Yes," said he; "I really believe the wind has gone down a bit. It is scarcely perceptible yet, but I think I can notice a slight difference for the better. Can't you sound the pumps again?"

The carpenter again got the sounding rod

down, and we anxiously watched his face by the light of the lantern as he measured the wet place on the iron.

"The water has only gained a scant inch, sir," he reported.

That was reassuring; so we waited more hopefully for morning, and as the first gray light of dawn showed in the east the gale began to moderate, and by eight o'clock we were able to get about the decks again and commence to clear up the wreck.

We found, on inspection, that all our sails were blown away with the exception of the jib and main-trysail. In addition, the three topgallant masts had been carried away, the head of the mizzen topmast was gone, and the fore yard was badly sprung in the slings, while the starboard, or lee quarter boat, had been washed from the davits.

Fortunately we had a new suit of sails below, that I had been keeping for use in coming on our coast in the winter season. These we got up and bent; new topgallant masts were fitted and sent aloft from our spare spars; the fore yard was fished, and by night we were standing on our course all a-tanto again.

We passed the Cape of Good Hope a couple of weeks later, and on Christmas Day we anchored in the roads off the island of St. Helena. Here we sent down the fore yard and bought a new spar on shore and had the bends calked by carpenters, while we overhauled and refitted our rigging with the ship's crew. This work detained us for a week at the island.

As this was my first visit to St. Helena, I made the usual pilgrimage to Longwood and to Napoleon's grave. The remains of the great Emperor had been removed to France by the Prince de Joinville a few years before, in 1840, but there were several people on the island who remembered him perfectly during his residence at Longwood, and it was very interesting to listen to their stories and personal reminiscences of General Bonaparte, as they usually called him.

Our repairs completed, we sailed and had a fine run till we came on the coast, when we encountered some heavy weather and head winds, but at last we got a favorable slant, and on Washington's Birthday, February 22, we sighted Cape Ann Light, and the following day

anchored off Commercial Wharf after a voyage of fifteen months, which had been full of adventure and had more than once promised to be most disastrous in its outcome. But thanks to divine Providence, I had been enabled to finish it in safety and with success for myself and my employers.

PART II

IN THE NAVAL SERVICE

PART II

IN THE NAVAL SERVICE

CHAPTER I

THE OUTBREAK OF THE CIVIL WAR

In 1859, after seventeen years of almost continuous sea service, for during all that time I had never been on shore more than two months at any one time, I determined to abandon the sea and pass the remainder of my life on shore.

The fact that I had just taken to myself a wife was, no doubt, a very potent factor in bringing me to this decision, which was strengthened by a favorable opportunity being presented just then for investing my savings in a safe commercial enterprise in Boston.

So I fell in with it, rented a nice little house in a pleasant suburb within sight of the gilded dome of the State House, and there set up my lares and penates.

At first this radical change from the free and easy habits of a sea life to the more rigid conventional routine of a mercantile career rather irked me, but by the end of a year I had shaken down into my new rôle, and should probably have become reasonably well contented to pass the remainder of my days in a 'longshore life, had it not been for the march of events, which, in bringing about the upheaval of a nation, sent me off on salt water again.

Early in April, 1861, the North was startled by the news of the attack upon Fort Sumter by the Southern forces, which followed so quickly after the secession of South Carolina, and on the 19th of the month the excitement in Boston was sent up to fever heat by the telegrams announcing the cowardly attack upon the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment by the Baltimore roughs, on its passage through that city.

The youngsters who are living in these peaceful days cannot possibly realize the state of public feeling in New England at that time. Business was practically suspended, and the sole thought of the people was to

avenge the insult to our flag and the murder of our soldier boys. The enrolling officers worked day and night, and companies and regiments were raised, equipped, and hurried to the front with amazing alacrity.

In common with all my friends and neighbors, I, too, was full of patriotic zeal, and should probably have enlisted in one of the numerous regiments forming, had not my attention been directed to an article in the "Boston Transcript" which referred to the great number of resignations of Southern naval officers that were pouring in on the Navy Department, and expressed a fear that our navy would be hopelessly crippled, as the Southern officers predominated so greatly in that branch of the service.

This gave me an idea, and I at once called upon the late Robert Bennett Forbes, the public-spirited merchant and shipowner, whose wise counsels in this exigency had been sought by Mr. Welles, President Lincoln's newly appointed Secretary of the Navy.

Mr. Forbes was in his private office, deeply immersed in his private correspondence, when I called, but he courteously listened to me

when I asked him why the vacancies in the navy could not be filled by the intelligent and experienced officers of the mercantile marine.

"I have already made such a suggestion to the Secretary of the Navy, Captain Kelson," said he, "and I have also sent him a list of a number of gentlemen whom I consider competent to fill the position of 'master' in the navy."

"Mr. Forbes," I responded, "will you not include my name in your list? You know something of my qualifications, I think."

With the promptitude that was a very notable characteristic of the man, he turned to his desk and wrote a brief letter to Mr. Welles, which he handed to me unsealed. "Take that on to Washington, yourself, Captain Kelson, and to supplement it, get half a dozen others from Boston shipowners who know you."

I did as he suggested, and within twenty-four hours was on my way to Washington. My interview with the Secretary was brief, but to the point. He read all my letters, asked me a half dozen pregnant questions, and then, writing a few words on a slip of paper, rang for a messenger and sent me with him across

the corridor to the Bureau of Detail, where Captain Charles Henry Davis — afterward Rear Admiral Davis — prepared my appointment as an Acting Master in the United States Navy.

While the document was sent back to the Secretary for his signature I took the oath of allegiance, and my orders were at once made out to the United States steamer Richmond.

Thus quickly was I transformed into an officer in the navy and assigned to a ship, a fact I could not realize as I walked down the steps of the building, which I had entered less than an hour before as a private citizen. But events, both public and private, moved quickly in those stirring days.

On my way up Pennsylvania Avenue I stopped in at an outfitter's and purchased a naval cap, and found an undress blue navy flannel blouse which fitted me. Upon the shoulders of this garment the tailor attached the straps of my grade, and, with trousers to match my coat, I returned to the hotel in time for dinner, a full-fledged officer, rather to the surprise of the clerk, who had seen me go out a few hours before in citizen's costume.

The next morning, in company with a friend, I hired a horse and buggy, and, obtaining a pass, drove over the "long bridge" and out about ten miles, to the encampment of our army.

This was but a few weeks before the disastrous battle of Bull Run, but at the time of the visit our troops were in high feather and felt very confident that the war was to be only an affair of a few months; a mere military promenade to Richmond.

All the officers I met seemed so confident of the result that I became half converted to their theory, and feared that I had made a mistake in going into the navy for such a brief period as the war was to continue. The real awakening from our dream came sharply when these same troops, a month later, were pouring into Washington a beaten, disorganized rabble!

The following day I went on to New York, where I found the Richmond at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and, by a most curious coincidence, at the very wharf where I had gone on board the Bombay nearly twenty years before.

The Richmond had just arrived from the

Mediterranean, whence she had been recalled by cablegram. After reporting to the executive officer I obtained a week's leave of absence and returned to Boston.

During that brief time I made such arrangements as were necessary for the comfort of my little family and for the proper continuance of my business, in which there was very little doing just then, and at the end of the week reported again on board my ship at Brooklyn.

The Richmond was rated as a second-class steam sloop-of-war. She was pierced for twenty-six guns, but mounted twenty-two 9-inch Dahlgren guns in broadside. She was almost a new vessel, a good stanch ship of her class, which included the Hartford, the Brooklyn, and the Pensacola. She was rather slow, making with favorable conditions about ten knots under steam. Before the wind or at anchor in a seaway she had a capacity for rolling beyond that of any ship I ever saw, before or since. Her performances in that direction a year later, when we were on the blockade of Mobile, afforded a constant source of interest and admiration to the entire fleet,

but were exceedingly unsatisfactory to us who were compelled to endure them. She was commanded by Captain John Pope, and had a complement of nearly four hundred officers and men.

I am thus particular in describing her, for she was to be my home for the next eventful two years.

Not long after I received my appointment, on June 30, 1861, news came to Washington of the escape from New Orleans of the Confederate privateer Sumter, under the command of Captain Rafael Semmes.

This steamer, originally the Havana, had been fitted out by the Confederate authorities, and although the mouth of the Mississippi was closely blockaded by the United States steamer Brooklyn, with two other ships, Semmes watched an opportunity when the Brooklyn was chasing a decoy vessel off shore, and dashing out, by her superior speed escaped our fleet.

Three days later, she captured and burned at sea the ship Golden Rocket, and by July 6 seven more prizes had been taken by this dashing privateer.

This, of course, created a tremendous excitement throughout the country, and our government sent every available ship they had in pursuit of her.

Orders also came to Captain Pope to hasten his preparations for sea, and on August 3 we sailed under sealed orders, which, when opened at sea, proved to be directions to make a thorough search for thirty days through the West India islands for the Sumter, and, failing to fall in with her, to join the West Gulf Squadron, then commanded by Flag Officer Mervine.

So we started on what proved to be a wild-goose chase, but which gave us an opportunity of making a very agreeable cruise, with the constant excitement of a possible capture that would have brought us no end of glory.

Among other incidents, we fell in one day with the wreck of Her Britannic Majesty's ship Driver, piled up on a reef off Mariquana Island, with her crew living ashore under tents they had improvised from the ship's sails.

We were boarded by her commanding officer, who bore the historic name of Horatio Nelson. He seemed to be a kind of nautical

Mark Tapley, exceedingly jolly under very trying circumstances, and perfectly at ease, notwithstanding his ship was a total loss.

In fact, he appeared to look upon that as a mere incident of the cruise, and declined our offers of assistance, saying he "was all right, barring the blasted mosquitoes, don't you know!" He was every day looking for the arrival of a British man-of-war to take them off, as he had sent a launch down to Port Royal for assistance.

At last, having nearly exhausted our coal, we steamed into Port Royal, Jamaica, on August 21, to obtain a fresh supply. Here we met the Powhatan, Commander David D. Porter, homeward bound after an ineffectual hunt after the Sumter.

After coaling, our thirty days having expired, we ran down to Key West and the Dry Tortugas, and stopping for a day off Pensacola at Fort Pickens, we received orders from the flagship to relieve the Brooklyn off the Passes of the Mississippi.

We anchored off the Pass à L'Outre, September 13, and soon after, the Brooklyn and St. Louis sailed for home; and the Niagara

for Pensacola, leaving us with the Vincennes and the Preble to blockade the entrance to the river.

A week later, we were joined by the little steamer Water Witch, a vessel that had distinguished herself some years before in the ascent of the river Amazon. We then settled down to the monotonous and wearying routine duty that was to be our lot for nearly a year on this blockade.

CHAPTER II

A NIGHT ATTACK BY A CONFEDERATE RAM

FROM the time of the Richmond's arrival at the Bélize we found ourselves the object of deep interest to a black, snaky-looking steamer that fell into the way of coming down the river daily to take a look at us and see what we were doing.

If she had confined her attentions to a mere reconnaissance it would not have so much mattered, but she frequently varied the monotony of this proceeding by throwing a rifle shot at us from a long range. We soon learned that this persistent and pestilent visitor was the Confederate steamer Ivy, in charge of Lieutenant-Commander Fry.

The Ivy was a converted tugboat, a technical term to be understood in a temporal, not a spiritual sense. She mounted a rifle gun, evidently a new acquisition, and she was testing it on us.

Fry was a former officer in our service and had been shipmates with our executive officer, Lieutenant-Commander Cummings, which may have accounted for his unremitting efforts to make things lively for us. To be sure he never succeeded in hitting us, but it is very far from amusing to be potted at daily with a 30-pound rifle gun, and with no opportunity of returning the compliment, as she kept discreetly out of the range of our smooth bore Dahlgrens.

However, after the Water Witch joined our fleet, we had a little easier time, as she was always signaled to chase whenever the Ivy annoyed us too much. This arrangement was a great relief to us, and at least had the merit of keeping the Water Witch in a high state of efficiency.

To render the blockade more effectual and to obviate the necessity of guarding the three mouths of the river, it was at last decided to cross the bar and take the ships up to the Head of the Passes, some twenty miles above our present station.

At the point where the river branches off, forming the Southwest, Northeast, and L'Outre passes, it was proposed to erect a battery

on shore and there establish a depot, if possible, in anticipation of a movement against the rebel forts and the city of New Orleans in the near future.

To this end we had brought round from Fort Pickens, Lieutenant McFarland, United States Engineers, to superintend the construction of the battery, and we also had on board a quantity of sand-bags, pickaxes, and intrenching tools, but as we found no sand, as there was only mud in the vicinity, a schooner was ordered to Ship Island for a supply.

On September 26 the Richmond steamed around to the Southwest Pass and endeavored to cross the bar, but we grounded and were kept hard at work for three days in forcing the ship over. At last we succeeded, and anchored off Pilot Town, six miles above. The next day we captured a small schooner, the Frolic, coming down the river with a Confederate flag flying, and from her we obtained a supply of late New Orleans papers.

October 1 we ran up to the Head of the Passes and anchored, where we were shortly joined by the Vincennes and the Preble, both old-fashioned sailing ships of war, the little

Water Witch and a merchant schooner carrying the 8-inch guns for our proposed shore battery.

We had long discussed in the wardroom the many advantages of this coveted position in the river, as compared with the discomforts of our anchorage outside the bar, and now that we had achieved it, with nothing to annoy us but occasional visits from the Ivy, we settled down to the placid enjoyment of our environments.

In fact we discovered that we even had "society" at our present station. This consisted of the family of a precious old scoundrel, half-fisherman, half-pirate, I imagine, when opportunity presented, who had a wife and a brace of buxom daughters.

In default of anything better presenting itself, some of our younger officers used to visit this fellow's cabin, ostensibly to purchase fish for their messes, but really with the hope of gleaning some information from him as to the condition of affairs at the forts above.

The family always seemed glad to see our officers, especially when they brought offerings of coffee or tobacco, and, posing as "an original Union family," spun them some very tough

yarns. Meanwhile, as we later discovered at our cost, they were quietly selling us to their rebel friends up the river.

On October 12 a schooner arrived with coal, and the Richmond took her alongside to fill her bunkers. During that day we got one of our 9-inch guns on the topgallant forecastle, where it could be given a greater elevation than in broadside, hoping thus to increase its range for the special benefit of the Ivy on her next visit.

At sundown, as we had not yet taken in our full supply of coal, Captain Pope decided to continue coaling at night, that we might the sooner dispatch the schooner back to Pensacola for some needed material for the battery, — which was fated never to be built.

That night I was officer of the deck from eight to twelve o'clock. When I was relieved at midnight we were still coaling, with the two guns of the midship division run in on the port side to facilitate the work.

The night was very dark, the moon had set, and the mist, hanging low over the river, shut in the hulls of the other ships of the fleet near us, their masts and spars only being visible.

Of course, the Richmond, from her size, must have been the most conspicuous object from the river, while the noise made in shoveling and hoisting the coal marked our position most admirably. A more favorable opportunity for a night attack could scarcely have been desired.

But a tired watch officer whose responsibilities have been turned over to his relief does not usually lose much time in reflecting upon possibilities; and I was soon sleeping the sleep of the just. For what transpired during the next four hours I have to depend upon the reports of others.

Master's Mate Gibbs, in charge of the Frolic, anchored astern of us, says that at about 3.40 A. M., seeing a long, black object moving stealthily down the river, he hailed, "Richmond ahoy! There is a boat coming down the river on your port bow!"

He says that he repeated the warning, but the noise of the coaling probably prevented its being heard on board of our ship, as he received no response.

Commander French of the Preble reports that at 3.45 o'clock a midshipman rushed into his cabin, exclaiming, "Captain, here is a

steamer right alongside of us!" When Captain French reached the deck, he says he "saw a ram, that looked like a large whale, steering toward us; but it changed its course to avoid us and made directly for the Richmond, and in an instant huge clouds of the densest black smoke rolled up from the strange vessel and we all expected to see the Richmond blow up!"

I, meanwhile, had been soundly sleeping, when I was rudely awakened by a tremendous shock, followed by the sound of the rattle we used as a signal to night quarters.

Jumping into my trousers, with my coat in one hand and my sword in the other, I, with the other wardroom officers, rushed on deck, fully expecting to find that we were boarded by the enemy, — as we very readily might have been in this moment of surprise!

Emerging from the hatchway, I saw on the port side amidships a smokestack just above our hammock nettings from which belched streams of black smoke! The vessel, whatever she was, was then slowly dropping astern, scraping our side, and at that moment she threw up a rocket, doubtless as a signal that she had accomplished her work!

I had but a moment to take in the condition of affairs, as I found sufficient occupation in getting the guns of my division run out.

Meanwhile, the ram had cleared herself from us and dropped slowly astern in the darkness. She soon reappeared again, however, steaming up stream as though preparing to give us another blow. As she came within range we depressed our guns and fired at her as best we could in the darkness. But as she was so low in the water and the mist was so thick she was a most difficult object to distinguish, and she soon disappeared.

By this time the Head of the Passes was in a state of tremendous excitement. The signal from the ram had been followed by the appearance of a line of fire-rafts up the river, drifting ominously down upon us, while by their light the spars of a bark-rigged vessel, and the smokestacks of two other steamers, could be seen in their rear. It was evidently a well planned attack in force.

Our little fleet, meanwhile, had all slipped their cables, and the Preble came standing across our stern under sail, her commander hailing: "What are my orders, sir?"

This was the critical point of the whole affair. Of course, it is very easy to say now what the orders should have been. But just at that moment things looked very squally for us. We had a hole five inches in diameter knocked clean through us and three planks were stove in two feet below the water line.

This was the result of the first blow from a ram that might, for all we knew, at any moment repeat her blow and send us to the bottom of the river. We had no idea then that she had disabled herself in her first essay, as proved to be the case, and might readily have been captured by us when daylight came.

We did know, however, that with the Richmond out of the way, our two sailing consorts in that swift-running river would prove an easy prey to the rebel steamers.

Oh no; it was not an easy question to decide in a moment. Farragut, as we all know, when in a tight place in Mobile bay, a year later, and the ship ahead of him answered his question why she had stopped with a reply, "Torpedoes ahead!" sang out: "Torpedoes be d—d; go ahead full speed!" But unfor-

tunately in our navy in 1861 we did not have Farraguts "enough to go 'round."

After hastily consulting with his executive officer, Captain Pope gave the order by night signal: "Proceed down the river."

And down the river we all went, the Preble ahead, followed by the Vincennes, and we in the Richmond bringing up the rear. Captain Winslow of the Water Witch appears to have understood our signal as, "Act at discretion;" as he reports that he steamed over to the other side of the river, then northerly, easily clearing the fire-rafts, which drifted harmlessly ashore. At 5.30 A. M. he says "he made out our fleet three or four miles down the river and no enemy in sight above; although he could see the smoke of three or four steamers four or five miles up the river." He then steamed down after us, picking up the Frolic on the way.

At early daylight I was directed by the captain to go up to the mizzen topmast crosstrees and report what was in sight. I found the Water Witch and Frolic steaming down to us, and far up the river I could distinguish the smoke of the Confederate steamers.

We soon came to the bar, and the Preble passed over safely, the Vincennes followed, but struck the bar with her stern up stream, and we came last and also took the bottom, fortunately swinging broadside up stream.

Meanwhile, with the daylight, the Ivy, the McCrea, and another rebel steamer came down, and, keeping at a very safe distance commenced their old game of firing at us at long range. It was very evident that they had a wholesome objection to our 9-inch guns at closer quarters.

Their shells passed over us and fell near us, but only one, a spent shell, came in through an after port, but fortunately it failed to explode, and Lieutenant Edward Terry calmly picked it up and threw it overboard.

The usual signal, "Chase the enemy," was made to the Water Witch, and like a bantam rooster she steamed up toward the two steamers, and they withdrew out of range.

We now piped to breakfast, and made a signal to two coal ships anchored outside the bar to "get under weigh." I was officer of the deck at the time, and, to my surprise, the quartermaster came to me at 9.30 and re-

ported, "The Vincennes is being abandoned by her crew, sir!"

"Abandoned! What do you mean, Knight?"

"They are filling up her boats, sir, as fast as they can. Just look for yourself, sir!"

I hurried aft, as she lay somewhat on our port quarter, not more than three hundred yards distant, and sure enough, her boats were at her gangway and were being filled with men.

I sent the orderly down to report the matter to Captain Pope, and in a few moments the first boat reached us, and I received Captain Robert Handy, who came over the side with a very anxious face, and with a large American flag tied about his waist.

As he met Captain Pope he said: "In obedience to your signal, sir, I have abandoned my ship, leaving a slow match, connected with the magazine, burning!"

I shall never forget the expression of poor old Captain Pope's face as he listened to this astonishing report. He was anything but a profane man in his daily habit, and I am sure that the Recording Angel dropped a tear over the swear words with which our commander emphasized his reply.

Meanwhile the important consideration in *our* minds was, how long that "slow match" might be expected to burn, and what effect the explosion of all the powder on board the Vincennes might have upon us, — perilously close neighbors as we unfortunately were.

By some fortunate chance, however, the match went out, and after waiting a proper time Captain Handy and his crew were sent back to their ship, one of her officers being detached, and sent in the Frolic to Barrataria, to bring the South Carolina to our assistance.

At 1 P. M. a steamer was seen coming out of Pass à L'Outre which proved to be the transport McClellan from Fort Pickens. She had supplies for us, and, best of all, our long-desired Parrott rifle gun, and had actually been almost up to the Head of the Passes in search of us.

It was a miracle that she had not been captured by the Confederates. Late that night the South Carolina, Captain James Alden, arrived.

Our Comedy of Errors is nearly ended. The following morning, with the aid of the two steamers, our fleet was all got afloat. All

was saved but our honor, and that we felt very anxious about, for as the news of our affair got around to Pensacola, the other ships seemed to think we had made too good time down the river, and they spoke of our brush as "Pope's Run."

The outcome of this was that our ship sent a special request to be allowed to join in the coming attack upon Fort McCrea at Pensacola. Our request was granted and we joined with the Niagara on November 24 in that fight.

We were the inside ship, were struck several times, and had several killed and wounded. This made us all feel better, and during the next two years the Richmond was in all of Farragut's fights. She was at New Orleans, twice passed the batteries at Vicksburg, was at Port Hudson, with a battery of our guns on shore during the siege, and was finally in the glorious Mobile fight. So that the Richmond made a record that placed her among the historic ships of the navy.

CHAPTER III

THE PASSAGE OF THE FORTS AND THE CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS

EARLY in March, 1862, while the Richmond was at Ship Island, where ten thousand troops had been brought together, Captain David Glasgow Farragut came out from New York in the United States steamship Hartford and took command of the West Gulf Squadron.

On the 20th of the month Major-General Benjamin F. Butler and his staff arrived at Ship Island, in the transport steamer Mississippi, and on the 25th the fourteen hundred troops on board of her were landed, and General Butler established his headquarters on shore.

Meanwhile from day to day, the vessels comprising Captain David D. Porter's fleet of twenty-one bomb schooners were dropping in and anchoring in our vicinity, adding to the formidable appearance of the preparations

now being actively made for the coming attack upon New Orleans by the army and navy.

There was at last no doubt that we were going at our work in good earnest, and although in the New Orleans papers, of which we occasionally obtained copies, the most exaggerated accounts were given of all that they were doing "to welcome the invaders to hospitable graves," we of the navy were anxious to bring the matter to the test of battle as quickly as possible.

Of certain facts we were assured. We well knew that Forts Jackson and St. Philip mounted one hundred and twenty-eight heavy guns; that they were admirably situated in a bend of the river where it is but half a mile wide, and were calculated with their cross fire to repel a foe ascending the Mississippi against the current, which in the spring runs with great rapidity. We also knew that one, if not two heavy chains had lately been stretched across the river at this point; and we of the Richmond knew, from our own experience, that the rebels had at least one iron-plated ram capable of knocking a hole through any of the wooden vessels of our fleet.

Such of us as had read the history of the war of 1812 were also aware that the British fleet in 1815 ineffectually threw over one thousand 13-inch bombs — exactly such as we were now preparing to use — into Fort Jackson during a nine days' siege of that work, which was then vastly inferior in strength to the present fort, and was the only defense of the river, where there were now two forts.

These facts we knew, but we were also informed by such deserters as came in to us, and also by the New Orleans papers, that a line of fortifications had been constructed all the way from the Forts to English Turn, just below the city, and also that two very large and very formidable iron-clad floating batteries were just being completed, to aid in making New Orleans impregnable against any force we could bring to bear upon it.

Against all this known and unknown force we had, under command of General Butler, fifteen thousand troops, most of them as yet untried in battle, and forty-seven vessels of war, — all wooden ships, — of which the Hartford, Richmond, Brooklyn, and Pensacola were

the largest and heaviest armed ships, while seventeen of them were small gunboats of the Kennebec and Katahdin class, three were old-fashioned sailing vessels, of no particular value for the desired service, and twenty-one were mortar schooners, carrying one 13-inch mortar each, which threw shells weighing two hundred and fifteen pounds.

With this force Flag Officer Farragut was expected to accomplish a feat which up to that time had never yet been performed successfully, — to reduce two forts situated in swamps on the banks of a rapid stream, where there was no possibility of coöperation by the land forces, and then to pass seventy-five miles up a river guarded, as we believed, by earthworks bristling with guns, to the conquest of a city garrisoned by fifty thousand troops and defended by formidable iron-clad batteries!

Decidedly this was not to be child's play, and although, as I have said, we of the fleet were eager for the coming fight, we were by no manner of means over-confident of success.

We were not to meet Indians nor Chinese; our battle was to be set against men whom

we respected as foes, and who were quite as fertile in plans for defense as we possibly could be in our scheme of attack.

But during the next month, although we talked these matters over in the wardroom in the evenings, our days were too busily occupied for such thoughts. The first difficulty that confronted us was to get our fleet over the bar that jealously guards the delta of the Mississippi, and a full month of really hard work was required to accomplish this first step.

At last, however, on the 1st of April, all the vessels of the fleet were gathered something more than two miles below Fort Jackson, the bomb schooners moored close in to the right bank of the river.

The coast-survey officers at once went to work to establish marks and to construct a map for the purpose of getting the bomb vessels in proper position and in correct range for their attack upon the forts, and on the 18th of April the regular bombardment opened and was continued, almost without intermission, until our passage of the forts.

This bomb fire at first, to us of the fleet,

was a matter of constant interest, and the topmast heads — we had sent down our topgallant and royal masts in stripping for the fight — were thronged with anxious spectators. But as no perceptible effect was produced on the forts by the bombardment, we soon lost our curiosity and came to the conclusion that after all this was simply to be the overture, but the real work would remain for us to accomplish.

Meanwhile the enemy were by no means inactive, and they soon resorted to one of their cherished plans of offense, from which they evidently hoped great things.

One night three enormous fire-rafts appeared bearing down upon us, blazing high with burning pitch and turpentine and sending out dense clouds of smoke. But for these we were prepared with an organized naval fire brigade, and before they came dangerously near our ships a fleet of boats was sent out with grapnels, which they fastened to the rafts and then quickly towed them into the middle of the river, where they drifted harmlessly past the ships, affording us an illumination on a grand scale.

The night of April 20 it was determined to

make an attempt to cut the chain cable in preparation for our ascent of the river. This chain was stretched across the river from a point abreast of Fort Jackson to the opposite side of the river, where a small land battery had been constructed to cover it. The cable was supported by passing over a line of seven hulks anchored in the river.

Our plan was to blow up one of these hulks by a petard, to be exploded by an electric wire, and a "petard-man," one Kroehl, was on board the flagship to work the apparatus.

This delicate and dangerous duty was placed in charge of Captain Bell, with the gunboats Pinola and Itasca, supported by the Kennebec, Winona, and Iroquois.

It was a wild night selected for the expedition, dark, rainy, with half a gale of wind blowing down the river. But few of us in the fleet went below that night, for we were all impressed with the importance and danger of the work, and we peered out into the darkness as the hour of ten drew nigh and the two leading vessels steamed noiselessly past us, every light concealed and their low hulls only visible by the closest observation.

To cover the attack the bomb schooners kept up a terrific and continuous fire upon the forts; five, seven, and once I counted nine of these enormous shells, with their trains of fire, in the air at the same time.

Anxiously we waited for the expected explosion of the petard, but time passed and nothing was seen or heard of our brave fellows! At last a signal rocket was thrown up from the left bank of the river, which was immediately answered by one from Fort Jackson, and then both forts opened fire.

Evidently our attack had been discovered. But had it failed? Not a sound came from our little fleet! A half hour lengthened out to an hour of fearful expectation. Where were our ships, were they all captured or destroyed?

Our men were frenzied with excitement, and murmurs went up, even from our well-disciplined crew, at our seeming inactivity!

At last a light was seen coming down the river, and then another, until one by one our gunboats appeared in the darkness and passed us to their anchorage. We counted them and found none missing, but we were compelled to

possess our souls in patience, for not until morning could we learn the story of their gallant exploit.

The Pinola, with the petard-man on board, ran up to the cable, and, selecting a hulk near the middle of the line, the petard was successfully thrown on board, but in backing the ship off the wire became entangled and broke before the exploding current could be turned on.

The Itasca, under command of Captain Caldwell, had singled out her schooner, and running alongside, a party of men was thrown on board, and while they were endeavoring to unshackle the cable, the signal rocket was thrown up, warning the forts of our attack.

But nothing prevented Caldwell from accomplishing the work he had come to do. For, notwithstanding the fire of the fort, our boys deliberately cut the large cable, using a cold chisel and sledge hammer, and as the chain was severed and fell overboard, the line of schooners, with the Itasca fast to her prize, swung down stream, and our ship found herself grounded on the eastern shore!

Fortunately, the Pinola discovered the Itas-

ca's condition and came to her assistance, tugging at her for over an hour and parting two hawsers before she got her afloat; but at last she succeeded, and our little fleet returned triumphant, having removed the famous barrier and successfully accomplished one of the most gallant feats recorded in naval history.

As a token of their disgust the rebels sent down, toward morning, the very largest fire-raft they had yet constructed. In fact, it was so large that the Westfield, a former Brooklyn ferry boat, now armed and attached to our fleet, was sent out to tackle it.

She quietly put her nose under the raft, and turning on her steam hose, quenched the fire sufficiently to prevent taking fire herself, when she pushed it ashore, where it made a superb blaze until daylight.

On April 23 each ship of our fleet received an order from Farragut announcing that the passage of the forts would be attempted that night, and notifying all the commanding officers of the proposed order of battle.

The mortar boats were to remain in position and keep up a continuous fire. The six steamers attached to the mortar fleet were to join in

the attack, but were not to attempt to pass the forts. The other ships were to pass in three lines, Farragut leading in the Hartford, we following him in the Richmond, with the Brooklyn astern of us, forming one division and passing on the Fort Jackson side.

Captain Theodorus Bailey led the line on the Fort St. Philip side, in the Cayuga, followed by the Pensacola, Mississippi, Oneida, Varuna, Katahdin, Kineo, and Wissahickon.

Captain Bell was to take the middle of the river in the Scioto, with the Iroquois, Pinola, Winona, Itasca, and Kennebec following. The order to all the ships was to keep in line and to push on past the forts as best they might.

We had not been mere idle observers during the past month on board the Richmond, but had been devising every method possible to strengthen our means of offense and defense. Among other ideas, we originated, through the suggestion of our first assistant engineer Hoyt, a plan that was adopted by other ships in the fleet, of protecting the boilers against shot by hanging our spare chain cables in lengths outside, in the line of the

boilers, thus improvising an armor that was found quite effectual against solid shot as well as shell.

After receiving our final orders, Lieutenant-Commander Cummings, our executive officer, who was afterward killed at Port Hudson, directed that our decks should be whitewashed, a novel conceit, but one that enabled us to distinguish in the darkness any loose articles on deck, such as might otherwise have been difficult to find in the excitement of action.

When hammocks were piped down that evening, it was with the understanding that the men might sleep until midnight, when all hands were to be called quietly, without any of the customary noisy signals.

That was indeed a solemn time for us all as we gathered at the evening meal in the ward-room. We now had immediately before us a task the outcome of which none could predict; but, even if we were successful, it was highly improbable that the little band of eighteen officers who had now been together for two years, in the close and intimate relations that can only be found in the wardroom of a man-of-war, would ever again meet at the table in

an unbroken body. Who would be the missing ones the next morning?

There was none of the merry jesting that usually marked our meals, and when the table was cleared every officer went to his stateroom, and I think each of us wrote some lines to his nearest and dearest in anticipation of what might happen before we saw another sun. I know, at least, that I wrote such a letter. Then lights were extinguished and all was quiet throughout the ship; such absolute quiet as is never found except just before a battle.

It seemed to me that I had scarcely closed my eyes when the quartermaster, with his hooded lantern, touched me, and said quietly, "All hands, sir!"

I hastened on deck. The night was dark and the air was chill. Officers and men were hurriedly but quietly going to their stations for action, which in our case was at the port battery.

My own division was amidships, where I had four 9-inch guns. My men came to their stations stripped for work, some of them without their shirts, their monkey-jackets knotted by the sleeves, hanging loosely about their shoulders.

Guns were at once cast loose and provided, and then all stood quietly awaiting developments. In the mean time our anchor was hove short, and we only waited the order to trip it and steam ahead. Down in the engine-room I could see, by the hatch near one of my guns, that the engineers were also on the alert, and the indicator showed that we had a heavy pressure of steam on.

Ah! here comes the Hartford, steaming up on our starboard quarter. As she comes abreast of us, our anchor is tripped, hove up, and we fall into place, a cable's length astern of her, and steam ahead.

The other two divisions are dimly seen moving up in echelon. Everything is done with the utmost silence, save for the thunder of the mortar fleet, which has now gone at it, hammer and tongs, and the air above us is filled with the hurtling shells, made visible in their passage, like comets, by their trains of fire.

As yet our movement has not become known to the enemy, and every instant we are getting nearer to the forts, as yet unharmed.

Ah! they have seen us at last; and Fort Jackson belches out upon the Hartford a hail

of shot and shell. We go ahead at full speed! Now we are ourselves under fire, and "Load and fire at will" is the order from the quarter deck!

Our ship throbs with the beat of the engines below and trembles with the shock from the continuous fire of our great guns.

For the next hour it is all madness! The captain of one of my guns is struck full in the face by a solid shot and his head is severed from his body; as he falls the lockstring in his hand is pulled and his gun is discharged! "Hurry the body below and load again!"

I call my junior officer to take my place while I go to my forward gun, and as I turn a shell explodes and tears his right arm away!

A young master's mate hurries past me bearing a message to the captain, who is on the topgallant forecastle; as he goes up the ladder and touches his cap to his commander a rifle ball from the fort, whose walls we are close abreast of, strikes him in the forehead, and the poor boy falls dead, his message not yet delivered!

Now we are so close to the fort that we can look in at the lighted portholes; a solid shot

passes between two of my men and buries itself in the mainmast not six inches above my head! I am covered with splinters, but unharmed.

The early dawn is breaking, and by its dim light and the blaze of a fire-raft drifting down past us I see just abreast of us a light river-boat crowded with rebel troops. As I look at her the captain of my No. 5 gun loads with grape and cannister, and depresses his gun as he trains it point blank upon the crowd of trembling wretches.

I dash at him and catch the lockstring from his hand, just in time to save them from an awful fate! We are all savages now, burning with the passion to kill, and the man looks at me resentfully as I frustrate his plan for a wholesale *battue!*

The fire upon us slackens, then ceases; I glance through a porthole; we are past the forts; both of them are astern of us, and, thank God, the battle is won!

CHAPTER IV

ON TO NEW ORLEANS

WHEN Flag Officer Farragut — soon to be made Rear Admiral for this night's work — looked about him from the quarter deck of the Hartford that glorious morning of the 24th of April which had made his name immortal, he counted fifteen of the seventeen vessels in his three divisions that had started with him the night before to pass the forts.

The Kennebec, as we learned later, had been disabled and had dropped back out of the fight; and the Varuna had run into a nest of rebel gunboats above the forts and had been sunk on the left bank of the river. Barring the loss of two of his smallest ships, his victorious fleet was now above the dreaded forts, and practically intact and ready for anything he might require of them at a moment's notice.

So we all steamed up two or three miles

above the forts and anchored, and the flagship signaled the fleet, "Go to breakfast."

We gathered at the morning meal in the wardroom of the Richmond with very different feelings from those of the night before, for by a great providence death had not come to our mess and our little circle was unbroken, although two junior officers were among the dead and wounded. But in the hour of victory one does not stop to mourn for those who have gone on before; it is accepted as the fortune of war!

We had, of course, many personal experiences to relate and to compare, and there were some who said that the worst was yet before us; but as a rule we were very happy, and so well satisfied with our success that we did not think much of the future as we enjoyed our well-earned breakfast.

Coming up from the table and looking along the shore with my marine glass, I espied a large Confederate flag flying from a flagstaff on the river-bank where there was evidently a camp. As we all felt just then as though we owned the earth and the richness thereof, I went to Captain Alden and, on the ground of

priority of discovery, asked permission to go on shore with my boat and pull down the flag.

The captain laughed at my eagerness and gave me leave to take the second cutter and go to the flagship and present my petition for permission to pull the flag down to Commodore Farragut.

I had the boat called away at once and started for the Hartford. I was taken into the cabin and there stated my case. "Why, certainly, Mr. Kelson," said Farragut good-naturedly, "go ahead and pull down all the Confederate flags you can find. And, by the way, make my compliments to Captain Alden and tell him we shall proceed up the river at once."

As I went over the side, Captain Boggs of the Varuna came on board to report the circumstances attending the loss of his ship.

Off I went in great glee. I landed, left a single boat-keeper in the boat, and with my eleven men walked up to the staff and was just hauling down the flag when my coxswain said, "Good Lord, Mr. Kelson, here comes a regiment of rebs!"

I looked, and sure enough, not quite a regi-

ment, but a large body of Confederates in gray were marching down toward us and were already within easy gunshot. I supposed, of course, that we were to be called upon to surrender, and gathered my little body of men close together, hoping to be able to make a successful retreat to the boat, when the Confederates halted and I saw that they were all officers, about forty in number.

One stepped out from their midst and approached us; and as I came forward to meet him he saluted and said, "Whom have I the honor of addressing, sir?"

He was a fine looking fellow and his uniform was as fresh as though it had just come out of a tailor's shop, while I was unshaven and was wearing my very oldest fatigue suit, that was powder stained after last night's fight.

I informed the officer of my name, rank, and to what ship I belonged and he responded: "I am Colonel ——, in command of the —— Regiment, Louisiana Home Guards, and am commanding here at Camp Chalmette. With the guns of the Federal fleet bearing upon us, I consider it my duty to surrender my command to the forces of the United States!"

Never in all my varied experiences, before or since that morning, have I been so embarrassed as on the occasion when this remarkably spruce and very fluent gentleman tendered me his sword, and the other officers in their turn, in strict seniority, also handed me their side arms in token of their surrender "to the forces of the United States," as represented by me and my boat's crew!

I did my very best, however, to preserve my dignity and to give a strictly official air to the whole proceeding. But there was something so supremely ridiculous in these forty officers loading me down with their weapons, when I had come on shore merely for a flag, that I could scarcely conceal my mirth.

I informed them that I should duly present the matter for consideration to our fleet commander, and saluting with great solemnity retired to my boat, making the best show of my twelve sailors possible under the circumstances.

I carried my boat load of swords off to the Hartford, and Farragut sent Captain Broom with a file of marines to parole the officers and to return them their side arms. I held on to

the flag, however, and I should have had it to this day had it not been lost at a church fair, where it had been borrowed for decorative purposes, some years later.

By ten o'clock the fleet got under weigh and steamed slowly up the river, keeping a careful lookout at every bend for the "line of batteries" of which we had so long heard but which we never discovered.

As a matter of fact we did not find a gun placed in position to oppose us until we came to Chalmette, three miles below the city, where half a dozen old 32-pounders opened upon us, but were at once silenced by the leading ship before the fleet could get within range.

All day of the 24th we steamed quietly up the river, past the sugar plantations, where sheets were hung out as flags of truce, and the only people visible were negroes who waved their hats to us in joyous welcome as we passed.

That night we anchored, getting under weigh early the next morning, and just at noon we rounded the bend in the river below the city, and New Orleans was in sight!

We steamed up close in to the levee, which

was alive with people, and where great heaps of cotton bales were blazing that had been fired by the authorities to prevent them from falling into our hands. At the same time the unfinished iron-clad Louisiana came drifting down stream all ablaze.

Just at this time a sudden thunder-storm burst upon us, and the rain fell in torrents as we dropped our anchors in the stream nearly opposite the mint. It was, altogether, a scene not easily to be forgotten.

The fruitless negotiations which followed between Farragut and Mayor Munroe, that came so near terminating in the bombardment of the city by the fleet, are all matters of history, and could not here be even intelligently summarized, except at great length.

As is known, on May 1 General Butler and his troops came up to New Orleans and took formal possession of the city we had captured; and from that time it was fully restored to the Federal government, from which it had been alienated for more than a year.

A portion of the fleet, with the Richmond as the flagship, soon after ascended the Mississippi, receiving in turn the surrender of

Baton Rouge and Natchez, but meeting with the first check at Vicksburg, where, in response to our demand, the city government by a bare majority of one vote declined to surrender; and as we, unfortunately, had no cooperating troops, we could not well enforce our demand, or, indeed, have held the city if we had been able to capture it.

Two regiments of troops at that time would have prevented the necessity for the terrible campaign of Vicksburg and the sacrifice of fifty thousand lives in the prolonged struggle which was to come.

The morning we sighted Vicksburg, as we were carefully feeling our way up the river, where ships of the size of ours had never before been seen, I had the morning watch, and while yet a few miles below the city we saw a curious-looking boat drifting down stream with two negroes as its occupants, who were directing their frail craft with rude paddles. As they came near us the darkeys made signs that they wished to communicate, so I slowed our engines and the men paddled alongside, and, catching the rope that was thrown to them, to our surprise both climbed on board,

setting adrift their little craft, which was merely an old mortar-box.

The men were brought to me, and proved to be two very intelligent negroes, who, hearing by underground telegraph that "Massa Linkum's big ships had whopped out de Confeds at New Orleans, and were coming up river to set de niggers free," had improvised a boat, and had trusted to the current to drift them down to the ships.

They seemed perfectly convinced that our principal mission was to set them free, which, as it was before the Emancipation Proclamation had been written, was very far from being the case. In fact, it was directly the reverse, and commanding officers were as yet forbidden to receive or to harbor escaped slaves.

General Phelps had already got himself into trouble because he declined to return these fugitives to their masters, and it seemed at first as though these poor fellows would have to be put on shore, where their fate, if captured after having run away to us, might easily be imagined.

But Captain Alden of the Richmond was

a very kind-hearted man, and he intimated unofficially that if the presence of these men was not brought to his notice he should know nothing about them. While their fate was thus hanging in the balance, the poor fellows were in a terrible state of anxiety; but when they learned that they might go to work as ward-room servants, without pay, their gratitude seemed to know no bounds.

To close this episode here, Jacob, the elder of the men, became my special servant on board of the Richmond; and when I later obtained a command, he went with me, rated as captain's steward, and for two years he was my devoted servitor, and never have I had a more faithful, humble friend than this runaway slave.

It was a relief to both army and navy when Butler's common-sense classification of the negroes as "contraband of war," cut the Gordian knot and enabled us to grapple successfully with one of the most difficult problems of the war, although why we should have been so long in thus solving it always passed my comprehension.

Finding that Vicksburg would not surrender to the naval forces, we ran down the river to

New Orleans, and after several months of preparation returned to Vicksburg, convoying a detachment of three thousand troops in river-boats. But as the rebels had been improving the shining hours by establishing a series of heavy batteries on the heights overlooking the river, and had a garrison of ten thousand men, we were no better able to cope with Vicksburg than we had been earlier in the summer.

We gallantly ran the batteries with our fleet, but we were no nearer to capturing the stronghold from above than from below. So in July we ran the batteries again, down river and at night this time, giving up the capture of Vicksburg to the army; and we all know the history of that long and tedious siege.

Preparations now commenced in good earnest for the naval attack upon Mobile, and we learned that for that service several of the new monitors were to be sent out to our fleet. But Farragut, now admiral, was a very old-fashioned sailor, with a strong prejudice in favor of wooden ships: he had gained all his victories in such ships, and he said he was too old a dog to learn new tricks.

So, as will be remembered, when he finally

went into the Mobile fight, his flagship was still the wooden ship Hartford; and singular enough, the only vessel he lost in that memorable battle was the new iron-clad, Tecumseh. She was sunk by a torpedo, and went down with Captain Craven and one hundred and thirteen of her crew!

Had Farragut taken that vessel as his flagship, as he was urged to do, he would undoubtedly have lost his life with the others.

I was myself a witness of an exhibition of his aversion to iron-clads. On the 4th of July, 1862, our fleet and the squadron of Admiral Charles H. Davis were lying above Vicksburg where the two fleets had met a few days before. Davis's flagship was the Benton, an iron-clad of which you will hear more later on in this narrative, and he was quite proud of her.

On the 4th Admiral Davis invited Admiral Farragut to go down with him in the Benton and "try the batteries," as he worded it. As this was an excursion entirely after Farragut's own taste, he at once accepted, and the two admirals steamed down the river on the trial trip.

The Benton carried a very heavy armament, but she was slow, and, being built on two hulls, did not handle well in a strong current. Arrived in good position, the ship opened fire on the upper shore battery, and the rebels were quite ready to respond.

They had lately received a new Whitworth gun, which they had just got in position, and they brought this into play on the Benton. By a sorry chance a shell from it entered one of the Benton's bow ports and burst, killing and disabling several men.

This was getting exciting, and Farragut, after striving for a long time to control himself, burst out: "D—n it, Davis, I must go on deck! I feel as though I were shut up here in an iron pot, and I can't stand it!"

And on deck he went, only compromising at last, through the entreaties of his friend, by entering the conning turret. This was the same instinct that sent him aloft in the Mobile fight. He wanted to see what was going on, and such a thing as fear of personal exposure never entered his mind.

CHAPTER V

CHASING A BLOCKADE RUNNER

In November, 1862, while we were lying off Baton Rouge in the Richmond, I was officially notified from Washington of my promotion to the grade of acting lieutenant. A week later I was ordered by Admiral Farragut to the command of the W. G. Anderson, then at the Pensacola Navy Yard.

The Anderson, a beautiful clipper bark built in Boston for the Cape of Good Hope trade, had been lately purchased by the government. She had been fitted out as a cruiser, her decks strengthened to carry an armament of six 32-pounders, two 24-pounder howitzers, and a 30-pounder Parrott rifle gun on the forecastle, and she had a full complement of fifteen officers and one hundred and forty men.

My orders were to proceed to the coast of Texas to join the fleet on the blockade, with

my station at Aransas Bay. This was welcome news, as there was a great deal of blockade running in that quarter, which offered us a fine prospect for excitement and prize money. Our preparations were quickly completed, and a week after I had taken command we weighed anchor, saluted the flag officer's pennant, and sailed for our station.

The first few days passed quietly, with nothing to interrupt the usual routine of sea life on board of a man-of-war. As we were now in the direct track of the blockade runners bound from the coast of Texas to Havana, their favorite port, I issued an order that a lookout should be kept at each masthead from daylight until dark; and I also offered a prize of twenty-five dollars to the man sighting any vessel that we should afterward capture.

As a result of these precautions the cry of "Sail ho!" was constantly heard from our vigilant lookouts; but the sails thus discovered proved, after much chasing, to be all legitimate traders, or at least their papers represented them as such, and we had our labor for our pains.

As I looked at our track, as laid out on the

chart by the navigating officer, at the end of the fourth day, it resembled a Chinese puzzle much more than the course of a vessel bound to a certain point with a leading wind. So as I felt that I had no more time to lose, I laid my course for Galveston, where I was to report to Commodore Bell before going down to my station.

The following morning I was aroused by my orderly, who reported that the officer of the deck had made out a schooner on the lee beam standing to the eastward. Sending up word to keep away in chase, I bundled on my clothes, and hurrying on deck found our ship with yards squared standing down for the schooner.

The vessel was so far to the leeward of us that her hull was scarcely visible above the horizon, but the breeze was fresh and our canvas was drawing well, and it was soon apparent that we were gaining on her. By the time we piped to breakfast we had raised her hull, and I felt confident of overhauling her in a few hours.

But it now became evident that the schooner was by no means anxious that we should come to closer quarters, and proposed to prevent it if

possible. Suddenly putting her helm up, she kept away before the wind and crowded on canvas until she looked like a great white gull.

This convinced us that we had at last fallen into luck, and that the schooner was what we had been so diligently seeking, — a blockade runner. To make assurance doubly sure, I gave the Parrott rifle its extreme elevation and sent a shell screaming down toward her, at the same time hoisting our colors, as a polite invitation for her to heave to and allow us to overhaul her.

But our courtesy passed unnoticed, and she displayed no colors in return. So we followed her example in making sail, and every yard of duck that could be boomed out from any part of the ship was brought into play.

We were evidently gaining on our chase, and everything seemed to promise well, when there was an ominous sound of slatting canvas, and looking aloft, I saw that the breeze was failing us. This was unfortunate, for a stern chase is proverbially a long chase, the forenoon was already well-nigh spent, and we were yet several miles astern of the schooner.

I ordered that all our sails should be hoisted

taut and sheeted close home, but the wind continued to get lighter until there was scarcely enough breeze to give us steerage-way. Occasionally we could feel a slight puff of air, and, remembering the experience of the frigate Constitution when she was chased by two English ships in 1813, I ordered that whips be rigged aloft and the sails thoroughly drenched with salt water. Still, with all our efforts, it was evident that we were not materially lessening the difference between the two vessels, if indeed we were not losing ground.

After consultation with my executive officer, I decided that my only hope of securing our prize before dark, when she would easily evade us, was to send a party in one of our boats in chase. Accordingly Mr. Bailey had the first cutter called away, the crew carefully armed, and a small Butler machine gun mounted in the bow of the boat.

The chase was now, as we estimated, nearly six miles distant; and as she was all the time forging ahead two or three knots an hour, there was a prospect of a good long pull for it. But the bait was a tempting one and the boat crew were very ready to make the effort.

I arranged with Acting Master Taylor, who was to go in charge of the boat, that if night should overtake him before he could return to the ship I would lay her to, fire guns at intervals, and hoist signal lanterns so that we could easily be seen. He also took with him a number of rockets and Coston's signals to burn if needed.

With my best wishes for his success Mr. Taylor shoved off, and his men pulled lustily toward the schooner. It was not necessary to give the order to keep a sharp lookout on the movements of the boat, for every man in the ship felt a personal interest in her, and all hands were watching her progress, from the masthead lookouts to the mess cooks, who hung gazing out of the ports whenever they could escape for a moment from their duties.

To pull a heavy man-of-war cutter six or eight miles in a seaway is not child's play; and although the men buckled to their oars like heroes, it was slow work. The sun was getting low when the officer of the deck called my attention from the boat I was watching so anxiously through the glass to a heavy bank of black clouds making to the northward.

"I am afraid that we are going to have our wind, now that we don't want it, sir," he said.

A vivid flash of lightning, emphasized by a rattling clap of thunder, followed hard upon this remark.

"Yes, indeed; you must get in your studding sails and flying kites at once, Mr. Allen, for it is coming down upon us by the run!"

Mr. Bailey came on deck and took the trumpet, as executive officer, the boatswain's call sounded shrill, and the light sails came rapidly in.

"Furl the topgallant sails, sir!" I cried. And they were barely in when the wind was howling.

"Stand by topsail halyards fore and aft, clew lines and reef tackles. Let go, clew down and haul out. Aloft, topmen, and put in two reefs!" was the next order.

I looked in vain for any sign of our boat. "Masthead there, can you see the cutter?"

"No, sir, the cutter and schooner are both entirely shut in!" was the reply.

By this time we were tearing through the water under our double reefs, keeping our course as nearly as possible toward where the

boat had last been seen. The squall brought rain with it in torrents, and, as the darkness closed in, the desire to overhaul the schooner became second to that of picking up my boat and her crew. So I decided to heave the ship to and let Mr. Taylor find me, as I certainly could not expect to find him.

I ordered lanterns hoisted at each masthead and at the ends of the topsail yards, and directed that a gun be fired and a Coston signal burned every ten minutes.

By this time the squall had passed to leeward, the rain had ceased, and the moon was struggling out of the ragged-looking clouds.

Boom! went our first gun, and at the same time the Coston signal was ignited and flamed up, lighting all about us with its deep crimson glare.

"Sail ho!" yelled the forecastle lookout.

"Where away?"

"Close aboard on the starboard bow, sir!"

And there, sure enough, loomed the sails of a schooner on the port tack standing directly across our bow.

"And it's the Johnnie!" exclaimed Mr. Bailey, as he gazed down from the forecastle

in astonishment upon the vessel almost under our bowsprit, her decks piled up with cotton bales, and her crew standing thunderstruck at their perilous position.

I sprang upon the forecastle and hailed: "Heave to, or I'll sink you! Ready with No. 1 gun, Mr. Allen!"

"All ready, sir!"

"Don't fire! we surrender!" came quickly from the schooner, as she flew up in the wind and lay bobbing helplessly on our port bow.

"Send a boat at once to me with your captain. And let him bring his papers, if he has any!" I called out.

"We stove our boat the other day, sir, and she won't float," they replied.

"Very well; I will send my boat to you. Mr. Bailey, have the second cutter lowered, and send Mr. Allen on board that schooner to take charge of her with a dozen well-armed men. Let her captain and his crew come back here in our boat. Take a master's mate with you, Mr. Allen!"

"Aye, aye, sir," and the boat was called away and made ready.

"By the way, Mr. Allen," I called out as

the boat shoved off, "see if you can find out from them anything about Mr. Taylor. In dodging him they have probably run afoul of us."

I had gone aft to see the boat off and to give these orders; and as they were executed I looked to see where the schooner lay, but could not find her.

"Forecastle there! where away is the schooner?" I hailed.

There was a moment's pause, and then the hesitating reply came from the lookout, "She has drifted out of sight, sir; I can't make her out!"

I hastened forward, and, sure enough, nothing could be seen of her.

"Schooner ahoy!" I hailed and listened, but no response came back.

A signal was burned, but it only served to show us our second cutter that I had just sent away, pulling aimlessly in the direction where we had last seen the schooner.

It was very evident that we were duped. While we had been lowering our boat she had quietly filled away, and had already such a start as to render a search for her in the dark-

ness well-nigh hopeless, more particularly as two of my boats were now away from the ship.

Thoroughly vexed at the stupidity of the forecastle lookout, whose carelessness had permitted such a ruse to succeed, I recalled the second cutter, and paced my quarter deck, my mind occupied with most unpleasant reflections.

It was evident that I must remain with my ship hove to, or I should probably lose my first cutter, if she had not already gone to the bottom in the squall! It was certainly a remarkably bad quarter of an hour that I was having just then.

"C-r-r-r-a-c-k!" came the sound of firing to leeward, and up shot a rocket, leaving a trail of fire behind it like a meteor.

"Hurrah! there 's Taylor down there with his Butler coffee-mill! Fill away, Mr. Bailey, and make all sail! Be alive about it, or we shall not be in at the death! There he goes again! I don't believe that schooner will get away from us this time!"

The yards flew round and we filled, as the topmen sprang aloft to turn out the reefs. The

topsail yards flew to the mastheads, the topgallant sails were sheeted home with lightning speed, and we bore down upon the scene of conflict with all possible dispatch.

But the firing had already ceased, and we soon saw signal lanterns hoisted from the masts of the schooner that had given us such a chase.

"Well, sir, we have got her at last!" came over the water in Mr. Taylor's familiar tones, as we approached.

"Glad to hear it, Mr. Taylor," I replied; "but what have you got?"

"The schooner Royal Yacht, sir. She ran out of Galveston, through the whole blockading fleet, night before last. She has a cargo of one hundred and fifty bales of cotton, sir!"

"Give the cutter's crew three cheers, men!" I said, and our crew sprang into the rigging and gave three as hearty cheers as ever came from one hundred throats.

"I will send Mr. Allen on board the schooner with a prize crew, Mr. Taylor, and you can return in your own boat with the schooner's captain and crew."

This exchange was soon made, and Mr. Tay-

lor came on board with his prisoners, and gave me the particulars of the capture. When the squall struck us, he had been already five hours in chase. He lost sight of the schooner, and for a time had his hands full in keeping his boat from filling. When the wind lulled, as nothing was in sight, he determined to return to the ship, and, hearing our guns and seeing our signals, he was making the best of his way back to us, when the schooner that was escaping from us almost ran him down.

He at once opened fire from his Butler gun at short range, and drove the schooner's crew from the deck by a well-directed rifle fire. Left without a steersman, the vessel yawed, the cutter dashed alongside, the boat's crew sprang on board, and the prize was taken!

Upon investigation, it proved that the Royal Yacht had run out from Galveston two nights before; and, skillfully piloted by her captain, who was very familiar with the intricacies of the bay, she had passed through our entire blockading squadron, under cover of the darkness, and had got to sea unnoticed.

By ten o'clock we were again on our course for Galveston, with the Royal Yacht following

in our wake, the cynosure of many watchful eyes. There was a good leading breeze, and by the same hour the following night we anchored among the Galveston fleet, and I reported my arrival to Commodore Bell.

The officers of the various vessels of the blockading fleet were very positive in their assertions that the Royal Yacht could not by any possibility have escaped from Galveston. But we found Galveston papers on board, printed the morning of the day she escaped, and much to their mortification the doubters were compelled to acknowledge the unwelcome fact.

The next day I dispatched the schooner to Key West with a prize crew, where in due time she was libeled, condemned, and sold with her cargo for nearly sixty thousand dollars. Of the proceeds of the sale the government received one half, and the other moiety was divided among my officers and crew.

As I had captured her on the high seas, out of sight of any other vessel, I received, as commanding officer, one tenth of our half, which made a very agreeable addition to my bank account, and was a pleasant souvenir of my first capture of a blockade runner.

CHAPTER VI

A NARROW ESCAPE

It was Christmas morning, and very early on Christmas morning, for the sun, like a great ball of burnished copper, was just rising above the mist that hung low along the eastern horizon, gilding with the first flush of dawn the cold, gray clouds and shimmering on the crest of the waves that rippled in the freshening breeze.

Under all sail and braced close to the wind, a war-ship is standing in for the land, where a long stretch of low sand hills is broken by the entrance to a bay, an ugly line of breakers making across; while a mile beyond, the tall, white shaft of a half-ruined lighthouse is visible.

The vessel is a clipper-built bark, her long, tapering masts heavily sparred and spreading a cloud of canvas. The lines of her hull are so fine, her bow is so sharp, and her run so

clean moulded that she could evidently show great speed were she not so closely hauled. As it is, although every thread of canvas is drawing, the bowlines are hauled well out and the weather leeches of the topsails shiver as the ship rises and falls on the strong easterly swell; for she is kept almost in the wind's eye by the old quartermaster at the wheel, under the watchful conning of the officer of the deck.

Near one of the after guns stands an officer looking through his marine glass toward the southward, steadying himself, meanwhile, by leaning against the weather mizzen rigging.

"Well, sir, what do your young eyes make of her?" I queried.

"It is certainly the Connecticut, and she is making the best of her way down the coast, under steam and sail."

"Just as I thought! Confound it, why could n't we have been a couple of hours earlier! Well, Mr. Bailey, it seems pretty certain that we have lost the supply steamer, as we did our blockade runner last night, by being a little too late!"

"That will make it a very dismal Christmas for us, sir."

"I know it, Mr. Bailey, and I am as much disappointed as you possibly can be. I was anxiously expecting some important private letters by the Connecticut, to say nothing of the necessity of stocking up my mess stores. I fancy that you are not much better off in that respect in the wardroom."

"Better off, sir! Why we are down to our very last can of tomatoes, and that, with salt beef, is very likely to be our Christmas dinner to-day in the wardroom, with possibly a plum duff as a wind-up. It 's simply awful, sir!"

"I am heartily sorry for you, Mr. Bailey, and I must see if my steward cannot rake up something among my stores to help out your table a bit. I shall expect you and the doctor to dine with me to-day, however. But we must be getting in very close to our anchorage, I think. Yes, there is our buoy just off the lee bow. We shall fetch it nicely on this tack. Call all hands, sir, at once, and bring the ship to an anchor."

The order was passed, the boatswain's call rang out sharp and clear, the boatswain's mates took up the refrain in a minor key, and above the notes of the whistles the hoarse cry,

"All hands bring ship to anchor, ahoy!" resounded through the berth deck. Responsive to the call, the quiet ship was soon alive with men hastening to their stations.

"Stand by halyards, sheets, clewlines, and downhauls fore and aft!" shouted the executive officer through his trumpet. "Lower away; let go; clew up, haul down!" There was a whizzing of ropes, a flapping of canvas, and in a moment the yards were down and the sails were hanging in festoons.

"Away, topgallant and royal yard men! Lay aloft, topmen and lower yard men! Trice up booms; lay out; furl!

A hundred men sprang into the rigging as they were called away; each yard swarmed with them as they rapidly furled the sails; and as the ship lost her headway, the anchor was let go, the crew quickly laid down from aloft, and the beautiful ship that but a few minutes before had been alive under a cloud of canvas was quietly swinging to her anchor, with sails trimly furled, bunts triced up, yards squared by lifts and braces, and no man to be seen above the hammock nettings save the lookout at each masthead and the commanding officer,

who from the poop had been critically watching this evolution of "a flying-moor," and now turned to express his satisfaction to the executive officer, who was turning the trumpet over to the officer of the deck.

"Very neatly done, indeed, Mr. Bailey! We could n't have beaten that in the old Richmond with three times our crew! Men who show the result of your excellent training so smartly as this at least deserve a Christmas dinner. Have my gig called away immediately after breakfast, and I will go on shore and see if I cannot knock over a bullock. I don't believe any of us will object to a bit of roast beef, and I shall be glad to make a little reconnaissance at the same time."

My predecessor on this station had been Captain Robert Wade, in command of the United States bark Arthur. As she was at Pensacola when I took command of the Anderson, I went on board of her one day to learn something about my new station.

"Well, Kelson," said Captain Wade in response to my queries, "it is a God-forsaken coast, and I am not sorry to have got away from it myself. You will need to anchor

in about ten fathoms, say three miles from shore; for when the northers come along next winter you will very likely have to slip, and then you will require plenty of sea room to work off shore."

"Any inhabitants about the bay?"

"I never saw any. There are some half-wild cattle on Matagorda Island, and I used to go on shore, occasionally, and shoot one for the messes. It 's a pretty lonely spot, I assure you!"

That was about all that I had been able to learn, in advance, of the stretch of coast I was supposed to take care of; and up to this blessed Christmas Day, now nearly two weeks, no signs whatever of life in the neighborhood of the bay had been discovered, although a bright lookout had been constantly maintained from the mastheads of my ship.

Consequently I felt that I was taking every reasonable precaution when I ordered my boat's crew to wear their cutlasses, and had half a dozen Sharps' rifles put in the stern sheets, for I knew that we would be more than a match for any possible bushwhackers, although I had no reason to expect any opposi-

tion. My surgeon had gladly accepted an invitation to join me, and soon after breakfast we shoved off from the ship on our quest for beef.

Across the mouth of the bay the breakers made a line of white-capped surf; but acting on instructions I had received from Captain Wade, I watched for a heavy roller, and then we gave way and went in with it, keeping the boat's stern to the sea, and thus crossed the bar with only a slight drenching.

About a mile, as I remember it, from the bar stood the lighthouse. Early in the war the rebels, in accordance with their general policy, had removed the lantern, and had then attempted to blow up the tower; but the sturdy shaft had defied their efforts, and, barring a ragged gap in one side, it was, as yet, practically intact.

Landing a few rods from the lighthouse, I left the boat beached, with orders to the crew not to stray away and to keep their arms in readiness for use. Then, accompanied by the doctor and my coxswain, I strolled up to the tower, intending to obtain from the top a look-out over the surrounding country.

But this I soon found was no easy task, for the rebels had blown out the lower iron steps from the inside: and it was only by using considerable effort that we at last succeeded in accomplishing our object, and only then after pulling down in the struggle two of the steps still remaining in place. However, at last we scrambled up and made our way to the balcony above the lantern-room.

From this point the view was very extended; and unslinging my marine glass, I, sailor-like, turned first to look at the beautiful picture my noble ship presented gracefully riding at her anchors, her tall masts tapering skyward, the ensign and pennant drooping idly from the peak and masthead in the light air, the guns peering from her side being the only thing to indicate that she was not some "peaceful merchant caravel."

"She is certainly a beauty, doctor. You don't often see a prettier craft, and she is as good as she is bonny, and carries a swift pair of heels into the bargain! But what are you looking at over there so intently? It is easy to see that you are not a sailor! Have you got a bullock in range over those hills?"

While speaking I turned my glass in the direction where the doctor was looking so earnestly, and the sight presented almost took away my breath, and for an instant I was speechless.

On our right, over the sheltering sand hill which had heretofore concealed them from our view, was a rebel camp in plain sight, into which, as I looked down from the tower, it seemed to me that I could have cast a stone!

Two score dingy shelter tents and two or three larger marquee tents indicated the presence of at least a hundred men, while before one of the large tents were two brass field-pieces!

There was no perceptible stir in the camp, and for a moment I hoped that we might not have been observed, and that possibly there was yet time for us to escape unnoticed from this trap into which I had so unwittingly cast myself.

But the silence and quiet were delusive; for as I looked again more carefully, I saw that men were stealing over the sand hills toward my boat, which they doubtless hoped to capture by surprise!

We have been told by those who have been revived, after coming well-nigh within the gates of death by drowning, that in the few agonizing moments before they became unconscious, a thousand recollections of the life they were leaving flashed through their minds. So now I recalled Wade's words when he had told me that this island was uninhabited, and cursed myself for having trusted to them. I thought of the report of the affair Mr. Bailey, soon to be commander in my place, would make to the admiral. What business had I, the captain, out of my ship, when a junior officer could have been sent in to make a reconnaissance, if indeed it were needed at all! And what sad news to be sent home to my young wife, for a Texas prison pen was but a shade better than death!

But I was aroused by the doctor's question, "Had n't we better be getting out of this, captain?" and coming to a realizing sense of the necessity for immediate action, I made quick time in getting down to the ground.

The boat's crew were amusing themselves by shying stones at a bottle they had set up for a mark, in utter unconsciousness of their immi-

nent danger, and they were evidently greatly surprised at the rapid manner with which we came down to the boat.

"Into the boat at once, men!" I cried, "and give way for your lives! The rebs are almost on top of us!"

The doctor and I climbed into the stern sheets as the men sprang into their places; and as they bent to their oars, the rebels, seeing that they were discovered, poured over the sand hills with exultant yells. Fortunately we got the boat well in motion before they opened fire, and their shots flew wild, save one that buried itself in the stern of the boat close to the rudder head.

"They are bringing the fieldpiece over the hill, captain!" said the doctor, who was watching the enemy.

"Give way, lads! Make her jump, if you don't want to sleep in prison to-night!" I shouted, keeping the boat as close over to the port shore as it was possible without fouling the oars.

Bang! and a shell came shrieking through the air so close to our heads that, as it burst, a fragment cut a slice out of the starboard

gunwale of the boat, between the stern sheets and the after oar. At the same time the stroke oarsman was wounded in the left arm by another bit of shell. But the brave fellow did not abandon his oar or lose his stroke; and the doctor, tearing a piece from his own shirt sleeve, bound it about the wounded arm and stanched the blood, without moving the man from his seat.

"They are waving us to come in, captain," said the doctor, as he finished binding up the man's arm and took a look astern.

"Well, we won't oblige them," I replied. "Give them a sight of our ensign, doctor, so that they may know for certain who we are. It will not be the first time they have fired on that flag!"

The doctor reached behind me, as I steered, and placed the staff of the boat flag in its socket, and "Old Glory" streamed out behind us as we flew through the water.

This brought another shell, which passed close astern of the boat, missing us by so little that we all held our breath as it came screaming toward us. But we, meanwhile, were not tarrying. Our light boat was dashing along,

and her speed evidently disconcerted the hurried aim of our adversaries, whose next shots were wide of the mark, although quite near enough to make their singing very unpleasant music.

But another and an entirely unexpected danger now confronted us; for as we neared the lower point of the bay, where we expected to be out of range, men were seen launching from the beach a boat somewhat larger than our own, with the evident purpose of cutting us off before we could reach the bar.

Under ordinary circumstances, or single-handed, I should not have objected to this prospective contest, for I felt very sure that, boat for boat, we should be more than a match for them; but if we stopped to fight, the artillerymen, who were now dragging their pieces down the beach, would get us in range, and a single well-directed shot from the gun would easily have put us *hors de combat.* So that I viewed this new complication as very far from being an agreeable incident.

But before the soldiers got their boat afloat, which they were going about in a very lubberly manner, we were startled by the report

of a heavy gun from outside, and a rifle shell came hurtling high above our heads and landed in the sand very near our pursuers. A second shot followed almost immediately, which to our delight exploded in the very midst of the men, capsizing the piece and dispersing the gunners in a very summary manner!

"Hurrah! doctor, the Anderson is talking back! There she is, God bless her!" and as I spoke the dear old barkey appeared in plain sight under topsails, courses, and jibs, right abreast of the entrance to the bay, and much closer in to the bar than she had any business to be, and the Parrott rifle rang out again, landing a shell in such very close proximity to the party who were getting the boat afloat that they at once abandoned their work.

"Give way now, boys; we'll go through the breakers if we have to go through bottom side up! Our friends will pick us up." And we dashed into the surf. The boat rose almost on end, then came down and touched bottom, but at the same instant another roller lifted her, the men bent to their oars sturdily, and in a minute more we were through the surf and safe in the quiet water outside the bar.

As we emerged from the rollers the Anderson luffed up in the wind, her main topsail was braced aback, and the crew sprang into the rigging and gave three hearty cheers, which must have been very depressing to our would-be captors.

We were received on board with a warm greeting that set all discipline at defiance for a few minutes, and then the usual calm routine of a well-disciplined ship of war settled down, and all excitement was repressed as we hoisted in the gig and made sail on the other tack for our anchorage.

My honest steward's welcome, when I went down to my cabin, was none the less hearty because in failing to bring off the coveted bullock I had compelled him to serve me a very meagre dinner; and as I sat down to the simple meal he had provided, I could not but be grateful for my very narrow escape from taking my Christmas dinner that day in a Texas prison pen!

CHAPTER VII

A SUCCESSFUL STILL HUNT

ABOUT three months after my adventure in the bay, the doctor came to me one morning after quarters and reported that he had a number of cases on the sick list of a decidedly scorbutic character. This, he said, was mainly the result of a lack of fresh vegetables in the messes, as we had been neglected by the supply steamers for a long time. Since my late experience, I had made no further attempts at obtaining fresh beef on shore, so had come down to a salt-beef ration.

The doctor said that it would be necessary to have a change in the dietary to check the progress of this disease, and he submitted his report for my consideration.

Although my orders from Commodore Bell contemplated my keeping a close blockade of Aransas, I had received, in view of the extent of coast I was expected to care for, permission

to exercise a certain amount of discretion, which I felt assured would warrant me in running down to the Rio Grande under the existing circumstances.

That was the southern limit of the Texan coast, about one hundred and seventy-five miles from Aransas, and was included in my beat, as the Anderson was the only ship on the blockade between Galveston and Matamoras.

When I notified Mr. Bailey of my intention and gave orders for getting under weigh at daylight the following morning, my executive officer did not attempt to conceal his pleasure at the prospect of a change from the deadly monotony of the blockade; and I observed that evening, as I took my after-dinner exercise on the poop, that the songs from the forecastle displayed an unusual amount of vigor in the choruses. Indeed, I had never heard "Dick Turpin's Ride to York" go off with such vim, and the chorus, —

"My bonny, my bonny, my bonny Black Bess,"

could almost have been heard on the sand hills, three miles away, that sheltered our Confederate friends, the Texan Rangers.

The next morning we were off bright and early with a fresh breeze from the northward, and the following day we dropped our anchor just north of the imaginary line that divided Mexican from American waters. In fact, I was so close to this boundary line that, although I laid my anchor on American bottom, when the wind was from the northward my ship swung into Mexican water. By treaty this line, starting from the centre of the mouth of the Rio Grande, runs out three miles W. N. W. I mention this particularly, as its importance in my story will be discovered farther on.

My anchorage was well outside of the fleet in the harbor, which to my surprise included a number of large merchant steamers flying the English flag, all of them busily engaged in loading or unloading; and all of them, as I observed, were well to the southward of the line, and consequently in Mexican waters.

Our anchors down, sails furled, and yards squared, I had my gig called away, and pulled in shore to an American ship of war with whom I had exchanged signals and which I had thus learned was the United States steamer Princess Royal, a captured English blockade

runner purchased by our government at the prize sale and fitted out as a vessel of war. She was commanded by Commander George Colvocoresses, a regular officer, a Greek by birth, and called by the sailors, who could not grapple with this Hellenic appellation, "Old Crawl-over-the-crosstrees."

After reporting and explaining my errand at the Rio Grande, I expressed my astonishment at the activity that was manifest on every side in the harbor.

"Yes," said the captain, "I have had the pleasure of seeing small vessels come in here almost every day loaded with Texan cotton, which they have quietly discharged in lighters, and those ships have brought cargoes of arms and ammunition from England which they sell at excellent prices to the Confederate agents ashore, and after they have discharged they will load up with cotton for Liverpool."

"What becomes of the war material?"

"Oh, it is all smuggled across the river, a little farther up from the coast, into Texas. Those guns you can now see being hoisted out will be in the hands of the Confederates within the next sixty days."

"And can nothing be done about it?"

"Absolutely nothing. I have protested with the authorities, and they assure me that nothing contraband of war shall be permitted to cross the river into Texas. But the under customs officers are easily bribed, and they become conveniently blind."

Returning to the Anderson, I pulled near the discharging ships, and I could readily see that they were, as the captain had said, hoisting out munitions of war, with no attempt at concealment. Of course, as they were ships of a neutral power in Mexican waters, we, as United States officers, were helpless in preventing this traffic, which was of such great benefit to the Confederates and which kept their trans-Mississippi armies so admirably equipped.

On going ashore the next day to arrange for supplies, I found the streets of Matamoras swarming with Confederate officers, who made themselves offensive to us in many ways. So I did not endeavor to prolong my stay at the Rio Grande, but pushed things along, laid in a generous supply of fresh fruits and vegetables, filled our water tanks, and was ready for sea

again within a week. Then one afternoon I went on board the Princess Royal to make my farewell call on Captain Colvocoresses, and returning to my ship, was about getting under weigh, when, taking a look seaward, I saw a schooner standing in for the harbor from the eastward.

Mr. Bailey, who was looking at her intently with his glass, exclaimed: "Captain, she is full of cotton and carrying a large deck load. She is a blockade runner, sure!"

A glance through my own glass verified the correctness of his report.

"By George, Mr. Bailey, we 'll have a try for her!"

"I am afraid it is no use, captain. She is too near the line; before we can get under weigh she will be in Mexican water, where she can laugh at us."

"Yes, if she finds out who we are. Let us see if we can't outwit her. I don't believe she has noticed us yet, and she is well to the eastward of the line yet. Quietly brace our yards awry; cock-bill the main yard a bit; haul down that pennant and ensign; run in our guns and close the ports; slack up the running

rigging; throw an old sail over the port gangway as though we had been taking in cargo there; get up a burton on the mainstay and a whip on the main yard; send all hands below. In short, turn the old ship into a merchantman for the time being, to throw the schooner off the scent. If we succeed in doing that, I will guarantee that we bag her."

Mr. Bailey hurried away to have this work done, and I sent my orderly to ask Mr. Taylor to come into the cabin.

I explained my plan to him, and told him to man and arm the second cutter and to drop her under the starboard quarter, where she could not be seen from the approaching schooner, and to be ready at a word from me to dash upon the prize. I knew that I could depend upon this officer for an intelligent and prompt performance of his share of the work, and I told him the instant he got on board the schooner to heave her to on the other tack and at once take the bearing of the mouth of the river so carefully that he could swear to the vessel's position, if the matter should come up in the prize court for adjudication.

Then I replaced my uniform coat and cap

with a white linen jacket and a straw hat, and took up a conspicuous position on the poop, looking very like a merchant captain. Meanwhile Mr. Bailey, following my suggestions, had transformed my dandy man-of-war bark into a merchant drogher, to all appearance from a short distance. He had also got himself up in the masquerade costume of a Kennebunk mate, and in his shirt sleeves was lounging over the midship rail, cigar in mouth, watching the approach of our Confederate friend, who was standing in for the anchorage evidently entirely unconscious of any lurking danger.

The greatest difficulty I experienced was in keeping my men out of sight. They were as full of excitement as a cat watching for a mouse, and would endeavor to steal up the hatchways for a peep at the schooner, notwithstanding all the vigilance of their officers.

At last the schooner was within little more than a cable's length of our port quarter, and her crew were standing by to shorten sail, in anticipation of anchoring, when I quietly walked across the poop and gave Mr. Taylor the word.

Like a tiger springing upon his prey, the boat flew through the water, was alongside the schooner, and Mr. Taylor was at the tiller, which he put hard down, to the utter astonishment of the steersman.

The boat's crew were already in possession, the schooner, was luffed up in the wind, close under my quarter, a line was thrown to her, her sails came down by the run, and she was our prize without striking a blow and almost without a word being uttered!

The captain of the vessel had not fully recovered from his astonishment when he was brought on board my ship. From him I learned that she was the America, with one hundred and eleven bales of cotton, with which she had run out of Laredo a few days before. Casting a glance about my decks, now filled with men, he muttered: "Well you 'uns certainly tricked me that time! This must be that infernal Yankee bark they told me was off Aransas Pass!"

As I did not deem it advisable to remain longer in port after my capture, although it was undoubtedly made in American waters, I got my ship under weigh at once, and within

thirty minutes we were standing out to sea with the schooner in tow, and the whole affair had passed off so quietly that I doubt if a vessel in port was aware that anything out of the common order had taken place.

I sent the America to Key West with a prize crew, and the following evening I was back at my old anchorage off Aransas with an abundance of fresh provisions and mess stores and enjoying the comfortable feeling that comes of outwitting an adversary.

CHAPTER VIII

CATCHING A TARTAR

BUT the good fortune that had thus far fallen to the lot of the Anderson was to take a turn, for we had not long returned to our station at Aransas when an affair occurred that was a decided damper upon the fun we had heretofore enjoyed in capturing prizes.

One morning while the watch was washing down the decks the lookout at the masthead gave the always welcome "Sail ho!" and upon closer inspection the vessel in sight proved to be a small sloop hugging the shore to the northward and evidently running down the coast on her way to the Rio Grande.

Of course we slipped our anchors at once and made sail in chase; but the wind was light and the sloop was of such light draft that, having a leading wind, she could safely keep almost in to the surf line, where we could not possibly get at her with the ship. In conse-

quence, the sloop was rapidly approaching the entrance to Aransas Bay, where she would easily have escaped us, when I resorted to my former expedient and sent in an armed cutter, with a light gun, to head her off, knowing that if I could get her off shore I should eventually capture her.

But when the captain of the sloop saw what I was up to, he put his helm up, without hesitation, let draw his sheets, and drove his vessel through the light surf and high up on the beach. Then the crew at once abandoned the craft, and, running up over the sand hills, disappeared.

The officer in my boat, following sharp upon his chase, ran alongside the sloop, of which he took possession, and found her loaded with between forty and fifty bales of cotton. But, unfortunately, she had been beached at the very tiptop of high water; and as the tide soon after began to run ebb, it was very evident to Mr. Allen that his prize would soon be high and dry, so he returned to the ship for further orders.

That evening at high water I sent in three armed boats, with orders for one of them to

lay outside the breakers and cover the landing party. The crews of the other two boats, under command of my executive officer, were directed to make every effort to get the sloop afloat, and for that purpose they were amply provided with hawsers, blocks and tackles, a kedge anchor, and such other paraphernalia as I deemed necessary for the proposed work.

The wind was light and there was a full moon, so that the conditions were very favorable for success. Mr. Bailey laid out the sloop's anchor, backed with our kedge, brought the hawser to the sloop's windlass, reinforced it with a heavy purchase, and got a heavy strain on the hawser with the aid of his twoscore men, who were working with all their heart, but not an inch would she budge. Her skipper had driven her up with all sail set, and she had made a bed for herself in the soft sand from which we could not possibly move her.

When the tide began to run ebb, Mr. Bailey decided to return to the ship and report progress — or rather the lack of it. I had been anxiously watching the operations from the ship, which I had anchored as near the beach as prudence permitted, and I was naturally

annoyed at the want of success on the part of my people.

I presume my manner gave Mr. Bailey the impression that I attributed the failure to his insufficient effort, which was by no means the case, but I saw that he was very much dejected as he made his report.

The officers talked the matter over together in the wardroom that evening, as I learned later on, and the next morning Mr. Taylor, who was my favorite boat officer, came to me after quarters and asked, as a special favor, permission to go in with three picked boat's crews that morning and, abandoning what seemed a well-nigh useless attempt to get the sloop afloat, to unload her and tow the cotton, worth twenty or twenty-five thousand dollars, off to the ship.

"I 'll guarantee to do it, captain," said the plucky fellow. "I propose to take in two or three coils of inch rope in the boats and after getting the bales afloat I can lash them together so that we can tow them off to the ship in this smooth water with our three boats."

"It will be very hard work, Mr. Taylor,

even if you get the bales afloat through the surf, which is doubtful. And I don't feel clear in my mind that it would be strictly in the line of duty. The sloop is ashore, and her blockade running can be put an end to for good and all by a match and a few pounds of powder, or we can knock her to pieces from the ship in target practice. Our men had a hard day's work yesterday for nothing, and I don't care to give them more of it."

"I know that, sir; but the crew are just crazy to do it. I should only take volunteers, and there are twice as many ready to go as I require for the work."

I saw that officers and men were alike anxious for the lark, as they considered it; they were always ready when I called upon them for the severest duty, and so against my better judgment I gave way and consented. But I insisted that the first cutter, well armed, should remain outside the surf to cover the shore operations, and that under no circumstances should she be taken off from guard duty. By this precaution alone I was saved from what would have otherwise been a very serious disaster.

Most of the forenoon was passed by the shore party in breaking out the bales and in warping them out to one of the boats outside the surf, and by noon nearly all the cotton was afloat. Just before twelve o'clock I was about giving the order to make the boat recall signal, for the men to come off to dinner, when I saw a series of puffs of smoke from the sand hills and heard the muffled reports of musketry. In a moment there was a rush of gray-coats toward my men, a rapid return fire from my guard boat, a struggle on the beach, plainly visible through the glass, two or three figures lay prone on the sand, and then the heads of men could be seen swimming from the beach out to the boat. One of the cutters was meanwhile launched and forced out through the surf, the rebels keeping up an active fire at it, and then all was quiet, with two boats pulling out toward us and a group of rebels gathered about my whaleboat on the beach!

All this had not taken much longer in the action than it has in the telling, and we on board ship were so utterly surprised at the sudden attack, that for a moment we looked on in speechless amazement! But only for

a moment, for the boatswain's call was not needed to bring all hands on deck, and the orders that rang out sharp and swift were obeyed with equal promptness.

"Aloft, topmen and lower yard men, and loose topsails and courses! Stand by to sheet home and hoist of all! Stand by to slip the anchor! Forecastle there; clear away the rifle and get a range on those fellows! Be careful, Mr. Allen, and give the gun elevation enough to clear our boats!"

The sails fell from the yards and flew to the mastheads, the courses were sheeted home and the tacks ridden down, the jibs ran up, our anchors were slipped, and filling on the starboard tack we stood in for the land, the forecastle gun, actively served, throwing shells among the rebels, who were taking shelter behind the sand hills.

"Put a leadsman in the fore chains, sir! Give me the soundings sharp, my lad!"

"And a quarter five," came the quick response.

We were drawing sixteen feet, and that left but fifteen feet of water under my keel. I certainly could not go much farther in.

"Get another cast, and be quick about it!"

"Qu-a-a-r-ter less five!"

"Stand by to tack ship! Put your helm down!"

"And a h-a-l-f four!"

"Hard a lee! Tacks and sheets! Mainsail haul!"

The dear old barkey came up in the wind like a bird, lost her headway, paused, trembling, for a moment, and then filled on the other tack as the head yards flew round. We began to edge off shore again, while the call from the leadsman, "Quarter less four," warned me that we had got on the other tack none too soon.

Out of danger with my ship, I could now turn my attention to the situation in shore, where I found two of my boats well off to me and the beach clear of the combatants, who did not care to face my fire; but my white whaleboat had been run up inside of the sloop, and was temporarily abandoned.

The two boats were soon alongside, and I learned, to my sorrow, that six men of the whaleboat crew were prisoners on shore and two of the second cutter's crew had been

wounded in escaping. The abandoned cotton was meanwhile floating about in the breakers, a disagreeable reminder of the cause of our discomfiture.

Mr. Taylor reported that when the rebels opened fire and made a rush for them, two of our boats were beached. The crew of the cutter ran their boat out and got her beyond the breakers under a heavy fire with only two wounded; but the crew of the lighter boat were less fortunate, and were headed off by the rebels, and six of them were compelled to surrender at discretion. Several of the Confederates were wounded by the fire from our guard boat, and Mr. Taylor thought that two of them were killed.

The next day I sent in a flag of truce boat to Colonel Hobbie, in command of the Confederates, and endeavored to effect an exchange of my men for several rebel prisoners I had on board; but failing in that attempt, I sent my boys their clothing and a liberal supply of tobacco. All of this, however, as I learned, was confiscated by the rebels, and none of their property ever came into the hands of my men.

The following day I found that my whaleboat had been taken away during the previous night, so I went to quarters for target practice and speedily knocked the sloop into kindling wood with our broadside battery, — as I should have done at first, — and so brought that episode to a close.

Six months later, while the Anderson was at New Orleans, Harry Benson, the coxswain of my whaleboat, who was one of those captured, came off to the ship and reported for duty. He had escaped from the prison pen at Matagorda wearing an old Confederate uniform he had managed to purchase, and had actually walked, nearly six hundred miles, through Texas to New Orleans!

CHAPTER IX

THE NAVAL TRAITOR

THE following spring the commodore ordered the Anderson to New Orleans to refit, and while there an official letter came to me from the Navy Department detaching me from the West Gulf Squadron and granting me two months' leave of absence, with orders to report at the expiration of that time to the officer commanding at Cairo, Illinois, for service in the Mississippi Squadron, which was then under the command of Rear Admiral David D. Porter.

On inquiry I found that I was one of the half dozen officers selected as a contingent from the West Gulf Squadron to be placed in command of Porter's fleet of river steamers, which had been transformed into vessels of war.

As the fighting was all over in our department since the capture of Mobile, and as there

was a decided novelty in the river fleet, I did not object to this transfer, more particularly as a furlough was the agreeable accompaniment of the change.

So I went home, and of course thoroughly enjoyed every moment of the first leave of absence I had obtained for more than three years. I found my only little baby, whom I had never seen, grown into quite a child of two and a half years, who would scarcely come to the stranger in uniform she had never seen, who called her daughter. And there were other family changes, some of them very sad ones, but in those busy war-days we had little time for sentiment.

Like everything else in this world, my two months' furlough soon passed, and I bade everyone good-by, and took the train for Cairo. And a vile hole it was in the early spring of 1864, the streets flooded and almost impassable and the wretched hotels filled with soldiers, gamblers, and the ruck that always hang about the skirts of an army.

When I reported to Commodore Pennock, he was kind enough to say that he wanted me with him at the Naval Station at Mound City,

a few miles above Cairo, and so I moved out there and was acting as executive officer of the Navy Yard, as we called it, when the rebel General N. B. Forrest, in April, made his famous — or infamous — assault on Fort Pillow, a few miles below us, carrying it by storm and massacring a large number of the colored troops who were defending the work.

The mangled survivors of this affair were brought at once up to our naval hospital at Mound City, and we improvised beds as best we could for their accommodation. General Forrest is still living, I believe, and I understand that he denies that any extraordinary cruelty was manifested by his conquering troops. But I speak from my own observation; and although it is now thirty years ago, the recollection of the horrors we saw among those poor mangled negroes is still fresh in my mind, as are the stories of the dying that were poured into our ears.

It was a brutal, cowardly massacre, pure and simple, and no amount of attempted explanation can make it anything else. It was only one sad episode of a cruel war, but it was an episode worthy of Alva, "the Spanish Butcher."

To convict the man, it is only necessary to read his original dispatch to the Confederate government, which fortunately is still preserved as a double evidence of his brutality and his illiteracy. It reads: "We busted the fort at ninerclock and scatered the niggers. The men is still a cillenem [killing them] in the woods. Them as was cotch with spoons and brestpins and sich was cilled and the rest was payrolled and told to git."

Not long after this event, Commodore Pennock sent for me, one day, and handed me my orders to the command of the ironclad Benton, then at anchor off Natchez, and suggested that I had better take the first steamer from Cairo down to my new ship.

In a way this was a piece of good fortune. The Benton had been at different times the flagship of both Admirals C. W. Davis and David D. Porter, and she was the largest vessel on the river and carried the heaviest armament. The trouble was that she was a very slow ship, and against the strong Mississippi current, going up stream she could scarcely make four knots an hour.

However, she had spacious quarters for her

commanding officer, albeit they were directly over the boilers; and she was the division flagship, which carried a certain distinction; while if she ever should get into a fight again she had the weight of metal to make her a very formidable opponent. So I packed my traps and was soon steaming down the river on the fine passenger steamer Olive for my new command.

. . . . . .

The torrid heat of a waning July day was being tempered by the delicious evening breeze that was blowing up the Mississippi River as I sat aft on the berth deck of my ship smoking a post-prandial cigar in one of the ports and trying to make up my mind to get into my evening togs and go on shore to make a long-postponed call. I had now been several months in command of the Benton, and on the whole they had not been unpleasant nor altogether unprofitable months.

The navy was just then very busily engaged in keeping up a close patrol of the river to prevent the Confederate trans-Mississippi army in Arkansas, under the command of General Dick Taylor and Prince Polignac, from crossing over the river and effecting a junction with

General Joe Johnston, which they were very desirous of accomplishing.

Cooped up where they were, these twenty-five thousand Confederates, with an abundance of military stores obtained from English ships at the mouth of the Rio Grande, did no particular harm; but let them get on the other side of the river and they would make a very material difference in the comfort of Sherman, who was then starting on his famous march through Georgia.

The navy was expected to prevent this passage of the river by keeping up an incessant patrol day and night, and thus a crossing of the army in force was an impossibility. We were constantly capturing rebel deserters, or stray couriers with letters from the Confederate leaders to Johnston; and occasionally, no doubt, some escaped us, but not many of them, I imagine.

I wish to emphasize the vital importance to us of keeping this patrol effective, and the great value it would be to the rebels to break it, as this has an important bearing upon the incident I am about to relate.

The ship stationed next above me had been

the light-armored (we called them tin-clad) steamer — Brilliant I will call her, although that was not her name. She was commanded by Acting Master Daniel Glenny, a native of Connecticut, a bright, active young officer, an excellent seaman, and a man who had always impressed me favorably.

As I was his senior officer and for the time commanding the division, Glenny always came on board the Benton to report when our ships met, which was almost daily, and I had often had him at dinner with me, and had come to know him intimately. A few weeks before this evening he had been ordered to a beat thirty miles farther up the river, not far from Skipwith's Landing, and consequently I had not seen him for perhaps a month.

As I sat in the port smoking and dreaming of home, my orderly came up and said the officer of the deck reported that a tug was steaming up the river, and that she had signaled, "I wish to communicate."

I at once went on deck, and by that time the tug was within hail.

"Tug ahoy!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"What tug is that? Don't come any nearer at present!"

"This is the Rover, sir. I have special orders for you from Commodore Morris from New Orleans."

"Very well; steam up under my quarter and come on board!"

The tug came near, and as she touched our overhang we lowered a side ladder, and an officer in uniform came on board and handed me an official document.

I went down to my cabin, opened the letter, and read: —

A. V. LIEUT. ROBERT KELSON, Commanding U. S. S. Benton:

Sir, — Upon the receipt of this order you will at once detach your executive officer and order him to proceed immediately, without any delay, in the tug Rover up the river to the U. S. S. Brilliant, where he will take command of that vessel, putting her commanding officer, Acting Master Daniel Glenny, in close confinement.

When this duty is accomplished send the Rover back to me here. Very Respt'y,

Yr. Obt. Servant,

(Signed) HENRY W. MORRIS,

Commodore Commanding West Gulf Squadron.

Here was a pretty kettle of fish! And what did it all mean? I touched my bell. "Orderly, send the captain of the Rover down here to me."

The ensign in command of the tug came down to my cabin. "Captain," said I, "do you know what duty you are on?"

"No, sir; except that I was to give you a letter and then follow your instructions."

"You have no idea of the contents of this letter?"

"I have n't the least idea, sir."

"Very well, I shall send an officer up the river with you to-night to the Brilliant. You will find her not far below Skipwith's, I fancy. Go on board your tug, sir, and be all ready to proceed up the river within an hour."

The officer bowed and retired. Then I sent for my executive, Mr. Willetts, feeling as though I were in a dream. He was a plain, straightforward man with no more imagination in his composition than a boarding pike. When I read the commodore's orders to him, he merely said, "Shall I put Captain Glenny in irons, sir?"

I had never thought of that unpleasant

detail in the affair, and could have beaten Willetts for the suggestion.

"The commodore says 'close confinement,' sir," he added.

"Yes, Mr. Willetts; but I think confinement to his stateroom, with possibly a sentry on the guards and another at the door of his room, will be near enough to close confinement until we get further orders. I can see nothing in this dispatch to warrant me in subjecting an officer to the indignity of irons."

So I packed Willetts off within the hour and turned in for a sleepless night in my berth, with the problem running through my brain, "What on earth has Glenny been doing to get him into this scrape?"

. . . . . .

Three evenings after that eventful night a vessel was seen steaming down the river showing the Brilliant's night signal. She passed us, rounded to astern of the Benton, and then steamed up within hailing distance.

"Benton ahoy!" came the hail in Willett's familiar voice. "I wish to communicate, sir. Can I come alongside?"

"Very well; come on board yourself."

I heard the captain's gig called away, and in a few minutes Willetts, looking as pale as a ghost, stood in my cabin.

"Captain Kelson" — he stammered.

"What has happened to you, sir?" I queried, for the man's manner warned me that something was wrong.

"Captain Glenny escaped last night, sir!" he said, as he sank into a chair.

"Escaped!"

And then he told me as much of the story as he knew, which was later supplemented, bit by bit, from different sources.

Three months before, Glenny had made the acquaintance of a Miss ——, a very bright, dashing girl, devoted to the cause of the Confederacy and willing, as she often boasted, to sacrifice anything but her honor for her country. She lived near the river, within Glenny's beat, and she soon discovered that he was attracted by her beauty, which was very striking, and it was not long until she had made him her willing and abject slave, body and soul.

Of the details of the affair we could learn little except that she came on board the Bril-

liant almost daily and Glenny visited her very frequently on shore. But this we did discover: that for love of this girl the young officer at last became a traitor and actually entered into a compact with the rebel officer commanding on shore to deliver up his ship to the Confederates.

The consideration for this treachery was to be a major's commission in their army, a hundred bales of cotton, and one hundred thousand dollars in gold, while, as it was understood, the girl promised to marry Glenny when the deed was accomplished.

A plan was arranged by which a body of the Brilliant's crew was to be given liberty on shore to go to a negro ball on a certain night, when the Confederates were to come off in boats in large numbers and take possession of the steamer, Glenny making a mere nominal resistance.

The sailors were duly sent on shore to the dance; but through a suspicion on the part of a vigilant junior officer of the Brilliant, the consummation of the plot was thwarted and the attempted surprise failed.

Meanwhile, news of the proposed plan was

carried down to New Orleans by a deserter from Dick Taylor's corps, and it came to Commodore Morris, who took prompt action by sending to me to place Glenny under arrest.

Mr. Willetts told me that he obeyed my orders by placing Captain Glenny under close arrest, and had stationed a sentry at the door of his stateroom and another at the window, which opened on the guards. The first night, however, at midnight, Glenny quietly got up, dressed himself, and, looking out of the window, said in a calm voice to the sentry, "Take this pitcher to the scuttle butt and bring me some cool water!"

With the instinctive impulse of obedience to a commanding officer, the man at once obeyed and went for the water, without a second thought.

During his absence Glenny crawled out of the window to the guards and lowered himself down by a rope into a small fishing-canoe they had towing alongside. He then cut the painter, and in a moment he had dropped astern in the swift current and vanished in the darkness!

We never saw Glenny again, but I heard of him a couple of years later from a Texan who

had met him, under another name, in the Confederacy at about the time of Lee's surrender.

One thing is very sure: had the rebels succeeded in getting possession of the Brilliant, as they planned, and had obtained her signal book from Glenny, they could have filled her with armed men, steamed down to the Benton, made their night number and ran alongside of us without exciting suspicion, and, pouring a large body of men on my decks, could have captured my ship almost without a struggle.

Then, under cover of the Benton, the trans-Mississippi army could readily have crossed the river; and with such a body of fresh, well-armed men in his rear, Sherman might never have reached the seaboard. Slighter chances than this have changed the course of mighty campaigns, as all know who have read history.

In conclusion, I wish to say that this incident is veritable truth, entirely uncolored, and a bit of unwritten history of the only naval traitor of the great Civil War.

CHAPTER X

HUNTING FOR BUSHWHACKERS

EARLY in September, 1864, after Admiral Porter had been transferred to the North Atlantic Squadron, I was ordered from the Benton to the command of the United States steamer Tyler, relieving Lieutenant Commander Edward Pritchett, who, in command of the Tyler, had also been in charge of the White River division of the Mississippi Squadron.

The Tyler, like the Benton, was a ship with a history. She was one of the two steamers that had performed such excellent service at the battle of Pittsburg Landing; and the navy claimed that those two boats really saved the day on the 6th of April, by keeping a large body of Albert Sidney Johnston's army in check and covering our disorganized troops that had been driven down to the bank of the river. By thus preventing the rebel attack

until the next day, Buell was enabled to effect a junction with Grant, and then turn what had been a check to our arms into a decided victory for the Union. It is quite certain that Grant in his dispatches spoke in very high terms of the service rendered by the gunboats on that occasion.

The Tyler was a large high-pressure wooden steamer, entirely unarmored, her wheels unusually far aft, and with two very tall smoke-stacks. In fitting her for the naval service she had been divested of all her upper or "hurricane deck" and "texas," thus giving her a flush spar deck three quarters of her length, with a spacious poop deck, raised some six feet, which afforded comfortable cabins for the commander.

She mounted ten 8-inch guns of sixty-three hundredweight on the berth deck, a 30-pound Parrott rifle on the forecastle, and two brass 12-pounders on the poop. This was a very formidable battery for a river steamer; and as she was very high out of the water, when the river was at a good stage her guns commanded the low banks and could sweep the level country for a great distance.

Captain Pritchett was a very vigilant and active young officer, and he kept the Tyler in a high state of efficiency, and nearly always in motion, so that she had earned from the Confederates the name of the "Black Devil," from her color and her apparent ubiquity.

Late in October, 1864, Major-General E. R. S. Canby, who was at the time in command of the military division of the West Mississippi, with headquarters at New Orleans, came up to White River on the passenger steamer General Lyon on a tour of inspection of our army in Arkansas. Brigadier-General Maginnis was in command of ten thousand United States troops encamped at the mouth of White River.

This point was also my headquarters with the Tyler; and as I happened to be there at the time, I made an official call upon General Canby, which he returned, and he afterward dined with me on board my ship.

In this way I came to know that a movement of our army up the White River in force was contemplated, with a view of flanking General Dick Taylor and thus retrieving, if possible, the laurels lost in the unfortunate

campaign up the Atchafalaya earlier in the season.

General Canby, was very anxious to make a personal reconnaissance of the White River. So, at his request, I dispatched the Hastings up the river with the general and his staff on the morning of November 3, that he might obtain a clear idea of the proposed field of operations.

All went well with the expedition until the following day, when, in passing close in to the bank at a bend in the river, a concealed guerrilla fired at the general, who was seated on a camp-stool on the upper deck of the boat, and wounded him very severely in the thigh.

Our steamer at once opened fire upon the bushwhacker, but he escaped into the adjoining woods, evidently uninjured. As the general was found to be suffering severely from his wound and the surgeon was unable to extract the ball, Captain Rogers very properly decided to return at once to White River station.

Upon the arrival of the Hastings a consultation of army surgeons was held on board, and it was their unanimous opinion that the

general could not be moved with safety, and that he must be sent down to New Orleans at once.

Accordingly General Maginnis came to me and expressed an earnest desire to have the Hastings sent down the river.

This was clearly beyond my authority, as the limits of our division only extended to Natchez, and from there to New Orleans the river was in charge of vessels of another squadron. But realizing the exigency, I first obtained an official requisition from General Maginnis, and then, severing the red tape, sent the Hastings off with the sorely wounded officer on my own responsibility.

After several months General Canby recovered and wrote me a very charming note from New Orleans acknowledging what he was pleased to call my courtesy, and in due time the Navy Department, with much less warmth, also acknowledged my official report of what I had done and condoned my unwarranted assumption of authority in consideration of the circumstances. So every one was satisfied excepting Captain Rogers. That gentleman, however, seemed to feel himself personally

aggrieved in having had his steamer bushwhacked, and nothing would satisfy him but an attempt at retaliation.

A Union scout, who had been on a mission up the White River lately, came into our camp, and from him we learned that the cowardly shot that wounded General Canby had been fired by a man named Kane, who lived near by the point where he had bushwhacked our steamer. Graves said that Kane boasted of having shot the general, and the scout informed us that his house was the headquarters for all the guerrillas of the neighborhood, who were but little better than robbers, as they were largely Confederate deserters, and preyed upon their own people as well as upon the "Yanks," as we were called.

After talking the matter over with Rogers and Graves, I consented to join in an effort to capture Kane and his gang, and I detailed my executive officer, Mr. Wilson, with fifty men to accompany me with Captain Rogers in the raid.

As there was no moon, we decided to make the attempt at once; and as we wished to reach Kane's house late at night, we started at a very

early hour in the morning, no information of the projected raid being given out, as such news had a way of traveling overland to the Confederates in a most unaccountable manner.

In fact it was announced carelessly on shore that the Hastings was going up to Cairo for repairs, so when she was missed the next morning it was assumed that she had gone there.

We steamed very quietly up the White River to a point where a bayou made in to the stream, some dozen miles below Kane's plantation, and, turning the boat, backed her up the bayou about a mile to a bend where she was completely concealed by the overhanging cottonwood trees, draped with their long pendants of moss.

Here we waited for night. At eleven o'clock we cast off from the bank and steamed down the bayou and into the main river, which we ascended with great caution, literally feeling our way, until Graves assured me that we were but a scant mile below Kane's house. We then ran in to the bank and, securing the boat to the trunk of a great tree, landed our shore party, which altogether numbered one hundred and ten officers and men.

We took up the line of march, Graves ahead, Rogers and I following closely, as indeed was very necessary in the darkness, and the men coming after us in double file and in as close order as was practicable.

The road was abominable, a mere cowpath, in many places grown up and almost impassable, and shortly after leaving the steamer we were compelled to cross a run where the water was knee-deep; but at last we came in sight of the house, a long, low, story and a half structure, part log, part frame, surrounded on two sides by a broad porch. At a short distance and near the woods, which on that side came quite close to the home buildings, were three wretched cabins or negro quarters, a half-ruined ginhouse, a smokehouse, two very large corn cribs, and a high-roofed barn.

No lights were visible, and as it was past midnight it was probable that all the inmates of the house were asleep. Of course it was necessary to surround the house closely, to avoid the escape of our quarry; but the danger in that operation lay in arousing the dogs, always so numerous and so watchful on a Southern plantation, and thus giving the alarm.

paused, and in a moment they were followed by a single hoot, and then all was still.

"Five minutes more, Watson, and we will make our rush. Let the cur bark if he will."

Again the hoot of the owl broke the stillness of the night, this time nearer, and, giving the word, we rushed at double-quick from our cover, deployed, and, as our comrades appeared, we had the house closely surrounded on every side.

"Keep a sharp lookout, Mr. Watson, and do not let a living soul pass your line. Don't parley with any who may try to escape. If they fail to stop and throw up their hands, shoot! We have shrewd and dangerous men to deal with, sir."

With Rogers, Graves, and a dozen men I mounted the steps of the porch and knocked loudly at the door. There was no reply, but we could hear movements within.

"Better not wait, captain," said Graves; "the Lord only knows what trick they may be up to. I would break in the door." And break it in we did.

Then, turning the slides of our boat lanterns, we flashed the light into the hall, which

was bare and empty. Near the foot of the stairs was a rough cedar settle with a row of pegs, from which hung a quantity of feminine wraps of various kinds and colors, with a dozen or more bonnets and worsted head coverings, but not a single masculine garment or hat, save a dilapidated old broad-brimmed straw, which had evidently been left over from the past summer.

I saw Graves gazing at this array of women's gear with a puzzled look on his face.

"Why, captain, this looks more like a young ladies' boarding-school than a bushwhacker's crib. What does it mean, I wonder?"

A feeble light flashed over the banisters from the upper landing, and a tremulous female voice exclaimed, "What is it you want here, gentlemen, at this time of night?"

"Well, madam," I replied, "we want Mr. Kane for one, and such of his friends — men, I mean, not women — as may be here."

"Mr. Kane is not here, sir, I assure you."

"I regret to doubt your word, madam, but it is my painful duty to search this house, and I must do it quickly. Please dress yourself at

once, for I can allow you only five minutes for your toilet."

The lady gave a little scream. "Oh, sir, you must n't come up here with all those men. It is quite impossible. There are none here but women. There is n't a man in the house."

"Where *are* the men, then?" I queried.

She hesitated, but only for a moment. "Cousin Bob and the boys are all away at a dance at Mr. Shriveley's, five miles up the Greenberry road. They won't be back until morning."

Graves drew me aside. "She is fibbing; did n't you notice how she hesitated? Those men are upstairs, and we shall have to go up for them."

It was very probable that he was right, so I said: "Madam, much as I regret it, my duty is plain. Your house is surrounded by the forces of the United States, under my command. I must search this house for the persons I have come here to arrest, and I shall do it, disturbing you as little as possible. You can have five minutes undisturbed in which to dress yourself — not a moment more."

She saw that I was in earnest and hurried

away. Sending some men with Mr. Watson to thoroughly search the lower rooms, we went upstairs at the expiration of the five minutes, and found three large chambers with dormer windows giving upon the roof. The first room we entered had two beds, and by the dim light of our lantern four heads could be seen buried beneath the bed clothing.

"Well, sir," said the lady we had first encountered, as she entered the room wearing a morning wrapper, with a shawl drawn about her shoulders, "are you satisfied that I told you the truth and that there are no men here?"

The smothered giggle that came from beneath the blankets was unmistakably feminine. Our position was certainly becoming embarrassing, not to say ridiculous, and I was beginning to feel very uncomfortable under the gaze of the lady who was acting as spokeswoman.

To tell the honest truth, I would rather have been facing a ten-gun battery just then — and the worst of it was that the woman evidently knew it.

Graves, who was of a coarser temperament, came to the rescue: "Madam," said he,

"Captain Kelson has already told you that we are here on duty and that we must perform it. If the persons in these beds are women, let them put out their hands, — they can keep their faces hid if they choose, — and we will be satisfied," and he looked at me for my assent.

"That is a fair proposition, madam, and will bring this disagreeable business to an end," said I.

The lady hesitated, then went to the beds and whispered to the occupants, and out came four white, ringed, and very shapely hands from beneath the coverings.

"I am satisfied," madam, said I, and as a matter of form Mr. Graves will accompany you alone to the other chambers and put the occupants to the same test."

Graves went with the lady, while we waited in the hall, and when he returned he was almost dumb with amazement.

"There are sixteen women in this house, not counting the madam here, and not a ghost of a man! What does it mean? I feel as though I had been raiding a nunnery!"

We went downstairs acompanied by our fair

friend, who, strange to say, now that our search was over, seemed uncommonly willing to talk, carefully evading our questions, however, when we endeavored to obtain some clue to this houseful of girls, — for most of them were evidently young women.

While I was apologizing as best I could for our ungallant and untimely visit, there was the report of a musket outside, and as we rushed to the porch a half dozen scattering shots were heard in the direction of the barn, while the hounds set up a dismal howl.

Mr. Watson came toward me in a great state of excitement.

"They have got away, sir!"

"Who have got away?"

"The men! There were a dozen of them in the barn and hearing us they quietly broke a board out at the back and got away in the woods. The last man of them made a noise and attracted our attention, and we tried to catch him; but he had the start of us and got away with the rest of them!"

It was even so; while we were searching the house and were being detained by the fluent young woman, her friends were escaping.

It seems they had had a little dance at the house, and a number of girls had ridden over to take part in it. When it was finished it was too late for them to go to their homes, so their hostess had doubled them up in her beds, and the men had quartered themselves in the barn and thus escaped capture.

We returned to the Hastings and made the best of our way back to our headquarters, with very little to say to the outside world concerning our raid. This episode, however, commencing in comedy, had a tragic ending for at least one of the actors.

Graves, the scout, was soon after sent on a special mission by the general on the other side of the river, not far from Jackson, within the Confederate lines. By an unfortunate chance he there met, face to face, one day, the young woman who had parleyed with us at her cousin's house on White River. Graves was in Confederate uniform, which he often wore on these scouting expeditions, but the woman recognized him at once and denounced him to the military authorities. He was arrested, tried before a drum-head court martial, and was hanged within twelve hours!

CHAPTER XI

THE END OF THE STRUGGLE

On the 9th of the following April, 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Virginia to General U. S. Grant, beneath the famous Appomattox apple-tree, and our long civil war was practically closed.

For months afterward, straggling bands of Confederates would come riding down to the banks of the river on the Mississippi and Arkansas coasts, and, waving flags of truce, ask for confirmation of the news they had heard, that "the old man had surrendered." The gunboats had been supplied with official printed copies of the terms of capitulation accepted by Lee, and we gave these out freely.

It was an interesting sight to watch these war-worn veterans as, with varying emotions, they read the documents that proved to them that the cause for which they had fought so long and so well was irretrievably lost.

Most of them frankly accepted the situation at once; some seemed relieved that the disastrous struggle was at last over; all were surprised and gratified to find that they were to have Grant's liberal terms, — permission to retain their side-arms, horses, and saddles.

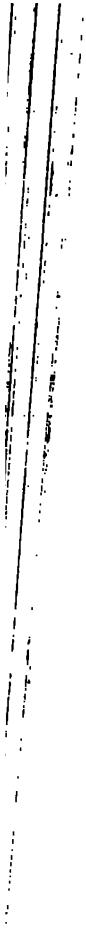
So they went their way to their several plantations, saddened men, but with an evident determination to devote themselves in the future much more closely to their own private affairs and to give politics the go-by.

In the summer of 1865 the Navy Department issued a circular to the large body of volunteer officers in the navy, notifying them that as hostilities had ceased, the department would accept the resignations of such as desired to return to private life.

And so in July, I, with many other of my brother officers, sent in my resignation, which was accepted with the thanks of the department "for long and faithful service," and I received my honorable discharge, a document which, duly framed, now hangs over my library fireplace, crossed by the sword which I had worn during the four eventful years of the civil war.

Since 1865 the old sailor whose career you have followed has had no more hairbreadth 'scapes by field or flood, such as have been here set down, and, barring a couple of peaceful passages to and from Europe in a passenger steamer, he has seen nothing more of the sea than could be observed from the rocks of Nahant or Mt. Desert on a summer afternoon. He meets his old shipmates occasionally at the dinners of the Loyal Legion, and enjoys listening to a good yarn on these occasions with as much zest as he did a full half century ago, when as a boy in the old Bombay he used to coil himself up near the windlass bitts on his first voyage to sea.

And now, after closing this record of more than twenty busy years of a sailor's life in both branches of the service, the writer, from his cosy chimney corner, bids his readers reluctantly that saddest of all words, good-by.



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